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General Field Notes

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Cover: Short-eared Owl by Les McCallum, London, United Kingdom

First Record of Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) in South Carolina

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On the morning of 12 October 2018, Szarek located a Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) near the corner of Jetty Drive and Prat Road in Huntington Beach State Park, Georgetown County, South Carolina. This sighting represents the first record for South Carolina.

Discovery

Szarek stopped to look for a kingfisher frequently seen just north of the Nature Center site where an opening in the scrub and trees affords a view of the Oaks Creek saltmarsh. She located an unusual looking flycatcher sitting far back from the road. After a couple of minutes of observation, Szarek was able to exclude the expected Great Crested Flycatcher, as well as most of the other locally common flycatchers.

Szarek stated: "The bird had a relatively large bill, yellow belly, no white on the tail feathers, and an olive back. The fieldmarks fit Tropical/Couch's Kingbird, and naturally, I was quite thrilled. I have been a birder for a couple of years, and this was my first big find!"

Szarek notified Ritch Lilly, and Rich notified the greater birding community. This allowed numbers of other birders to see the kingbird, which by this time had become active, chasing large dragonflies.

Observations and Identification

The Tropical Kingbird was observed, discussed, and described for over 10 hours by several birders. Many photographs were taken of the perched bird. Using online resources and field guides, the group eliminated several *Tyrannus* species.

In the field, the Tropical Kingbird can be separated from Cassin's and Western Kingbirds. Cassin's Kingbird presents a uniformly medium-gray head, chest and back, setting off a white malar bar. The Cassin's tail is black with a white tip. The Western Kingbird's head, nape, mantle, and chest are light gray showing less contrast with the white malar and more contrast with the dark lores and eye, presenting a thin-masked appearance. The tail of a Western Kingbird is blackish with white edges. The bills of Cassin's and Western are both relatively small in comparison with Tropical Kingbird.

In contrast, the kingbird we observed had a brown tail with no white edging or tip. Its head was light gray, fading gradually into a whitish malar and throat. The thin mask was a shade or two darker than the gray face, but not black. The bill was hefty, long, and straight. The chest was yellow with an olive wash, not gray. Other field marks noted by observers were the olive back, a belly yellow though the vent, and a deeply notched tail. The tails of Cassin's and Western Kingbirds appear un-notched when folded.

Based on observable physical characteristics, the Tropical Kingbird cannot be distinguished from the Couch's Kingbird, even with excellent photographs. So far, recent attempts to establish diagnostic markers based on bill and primary feather morphology have been inconclusive (Garvey and Iliff 2010). Fortunately, these kingbirdspecies have distinct vocalizations, and the bird of 12 October 2018 often gave a high- pitched sputtering twitter in three or four notes, its typical call. Couch's typically give a squeaky, single "*tik*", sometimes followed by a raspy "*wheeer*" (Stouffer and Chesser 1998). No single notes were observed. Ed Blitch, Pam Ford, and Brad Sale obtained recordings, and all observers heard the calls well.

Distribution and Recent Vagrancy

Fairly common and widespread throughout its range, the Tropical Kingbird prefers open country with trees and scrub and has adapted to human landscapes like parks and farms. In suitable habitat, the species occurs regularly from the southeastern United States to Argentina's Rio Negro (Stouffer and Chesser 1998).

In the United States, the northern subspecies *T.m. satrapa* breeds in southeastern Arizona and southernmost Texas. In the fall (September into November), the Tropical Kingbird is a regular, annual visitor along the California coast, and has been recorded with increasing frequency since the 1990s in Oregon and Washington (Stouffer and Chesser 1998). The Washington Bird Records Committee removed Tropical Kingbird from its review list in 2011 (Matt Bartels, pers. comm.)

Along the east coast, the Tropical Kingbird was a very rare fall vagrant until the early 2000s. The first record was a remarkably well-studied specimen collected from Scarborough Marsh, Maine, in 1915 (Norton 1916). Bird records committees along the East Coast have accepted 13 reports in the past 30 years, with five in the last five years and at least five more currently pending. North Carolina has accepted four records of Tropical Kingbird: 29 December 1985 to 3 January 1986 at Lake Mattamuskeet (LeGrand et al. 1990); 29 October to 18 November 2001 at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge (LeGrand et al. 2002); 19 November to 26 December 2005 at Pettigew State Park (LeGrand et al. 2006); and 3 June 2017 at North River Farms (Campbell et al. 2018).

Conclusion

The South Carolina Bird Records Committee accepted this as the state's first record of Tropical Kingbird based on reports submitted by Erinn Szarek, Ed Blitch, Pam Ford, Craig Watson, John Cox, and Frank Lawkins (Givens et al. 2019). The South Carolina Bird Records Committee is currently reviewing a report of Tropical Kingbird observed and photographed by Pam Ford and Craig Watson at Fort Moultrie, Charleston, SC, on16 June 2019 (Southern 2019).

This first record fits a pattern of vagrancy along the East Coast that is either increasing or is better detected. For now, observers must continue to rely on vocalization to separate Tropical Kingbird from the rarer but still possible Couch's Kingbird. As more birders learn to use mobile devices to record bird sounds, identifications are more certain and specific. Those skills may be the key to the first record of Couch's Kingbird in the Carolinas.

Tropical Kingbird, 12 Oct 2018, Georgetown Co, SC. Photo by Craig Watson.

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B. Everett Jordan Lake Bird Counts – Part Two

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Part One in this series of articles (published in *The Chat, Vol. 84, No. 4, Fall 2020*) covered background information on the Jordan Lake bird counts and discussed the long-term data for several species of birds that are closely tied to the lake itself. Part Two explores a family of birds associated with non-lake habitats within the count circle, the woodpeckers.

The 15-mile diameter Jordan Lake count circle includes more than just the immediate environs of the lake itself. There are wooded areas, open fields, residential areas, and stream and river bottom habitats as well. Of course, the count circle encompasses a lot of private property, but our intrepid counters do their best to cover as much of the accessible land areas as they can. This article looks at woodpeckers, a group of birds that includes species that inhabit upland and river bottom habitats, deciduous and pine woodlands, wetlands, and residential areas. In short, one or several of these species are found throughout the count circle, except perhaps in the middle of the lake.

Woodpeckers

Most of our woodpecker species are year-round permanent residents. The two exceptions are Northern Flickers and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. Flickers do breed here, but their numbers increase in the non-breeding seasons, augmented by migratory individuals who come south for the winter. Sapsuckers migrate into our area for the winter but are absent during the breeding season.

These and subsequent graphs use 'birds per party hour' versus time. This helps in comparing data because time spent in the field by counting teams varies from year to year. Spring bird count graphs (SBC) are yellow; Christmas bird count graphs (CBC) are green.

Figure 1 is a graph of the spring bird count (SBC) data for all woodpecker species together, and Figure 2 is for all woodpeckers found on the Christmas bird counts (CBC). These numbers have fluctuated quite a bit over the years. Can we speculate on the reasons for the peaks and troughs?

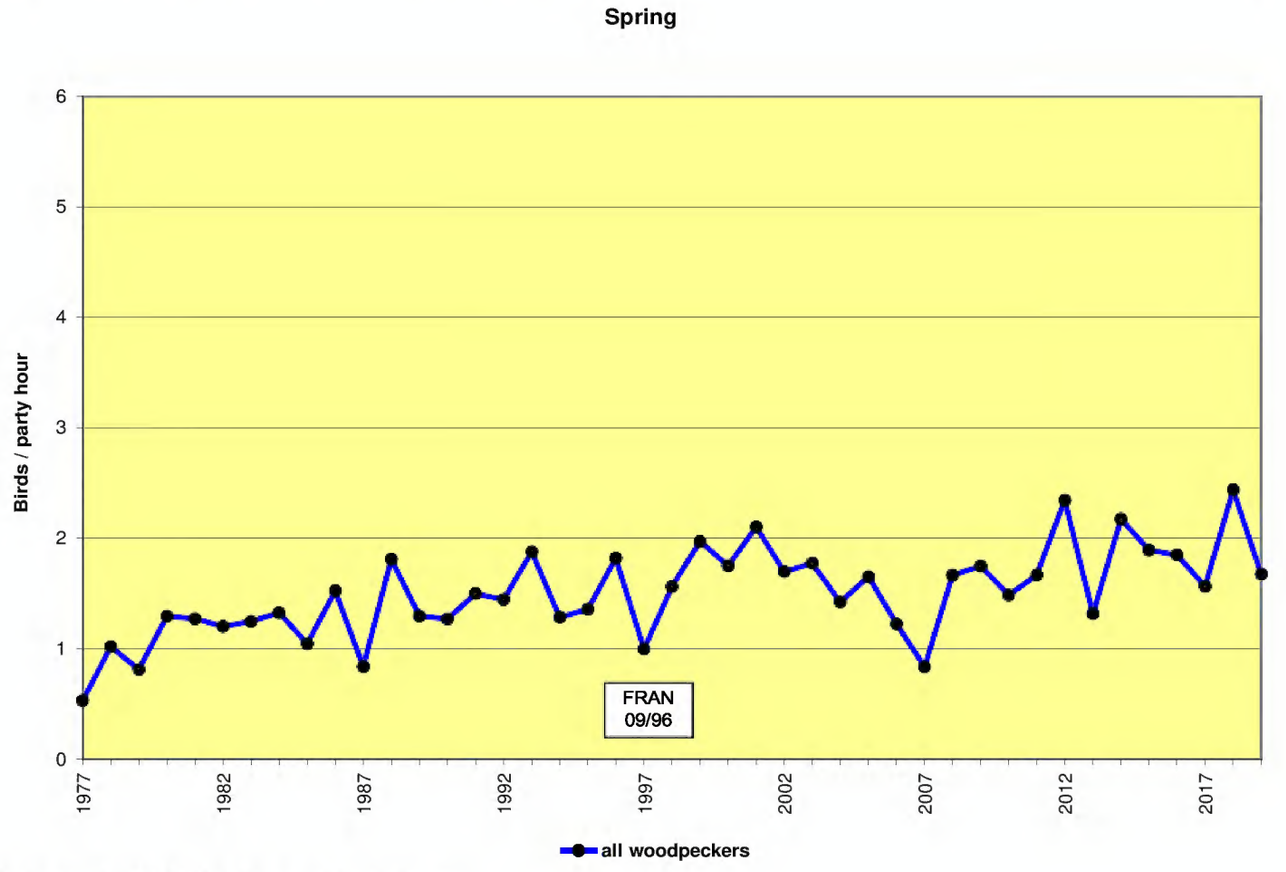

Figure 1. SBC, all woodpeckers

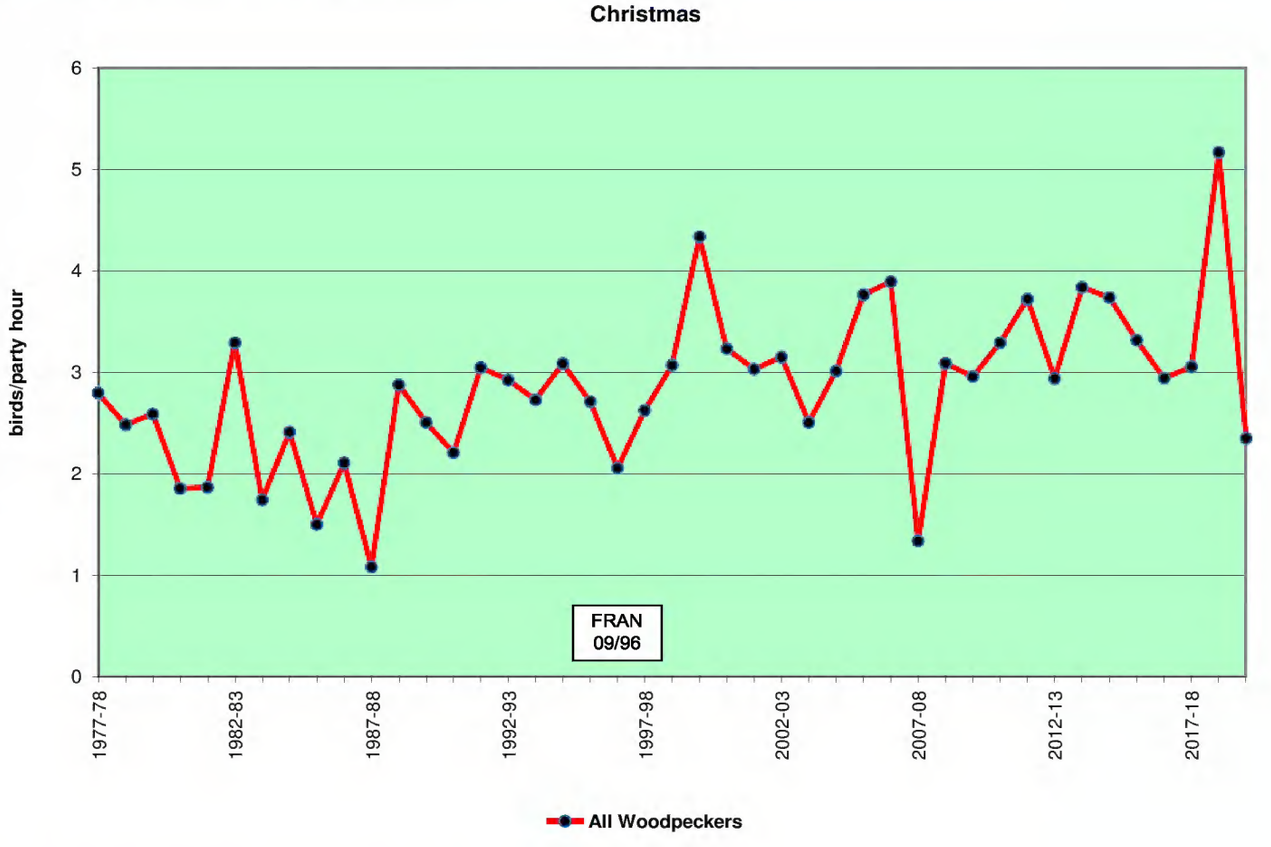

Figure 2. CBC, all woodpeckers

In September 1996, Hurricane Fran came inland and hit the Piedmont of North Carolina hard. Many trees were blown over and killed. Could that have been the cause of the low numbers of woodpeckers the following year—i.e., were many birds killed by the storm? Note that woodpecker numbers climb in the next few years. Could all those dead trees have been harboring insects that became food for the remaining woodpeckers? In an abundance of food, birds typically lay more eggs and successfully raise more babies. It is nice to think that the population levels did respond to better conditions and populations returned to stable numbers.

However, now consider the very low numbers in SBC 2007 and CBC 2007-08. There were no hurricanes or other adverse weather events prior to those low counts. On the other hand, we fielded fewer counting parties than average for the SBC 2007 count,so the coverage of some sections of the count circle was lacking. And we suffered from cold, very rainy conditions during the CBC 2007-08 count. Some parties even missed species like chickadees, towhees, and cardinals. This illustrates the problems that arise when trying to speculate on the reasons for high or low numbers in any given year.

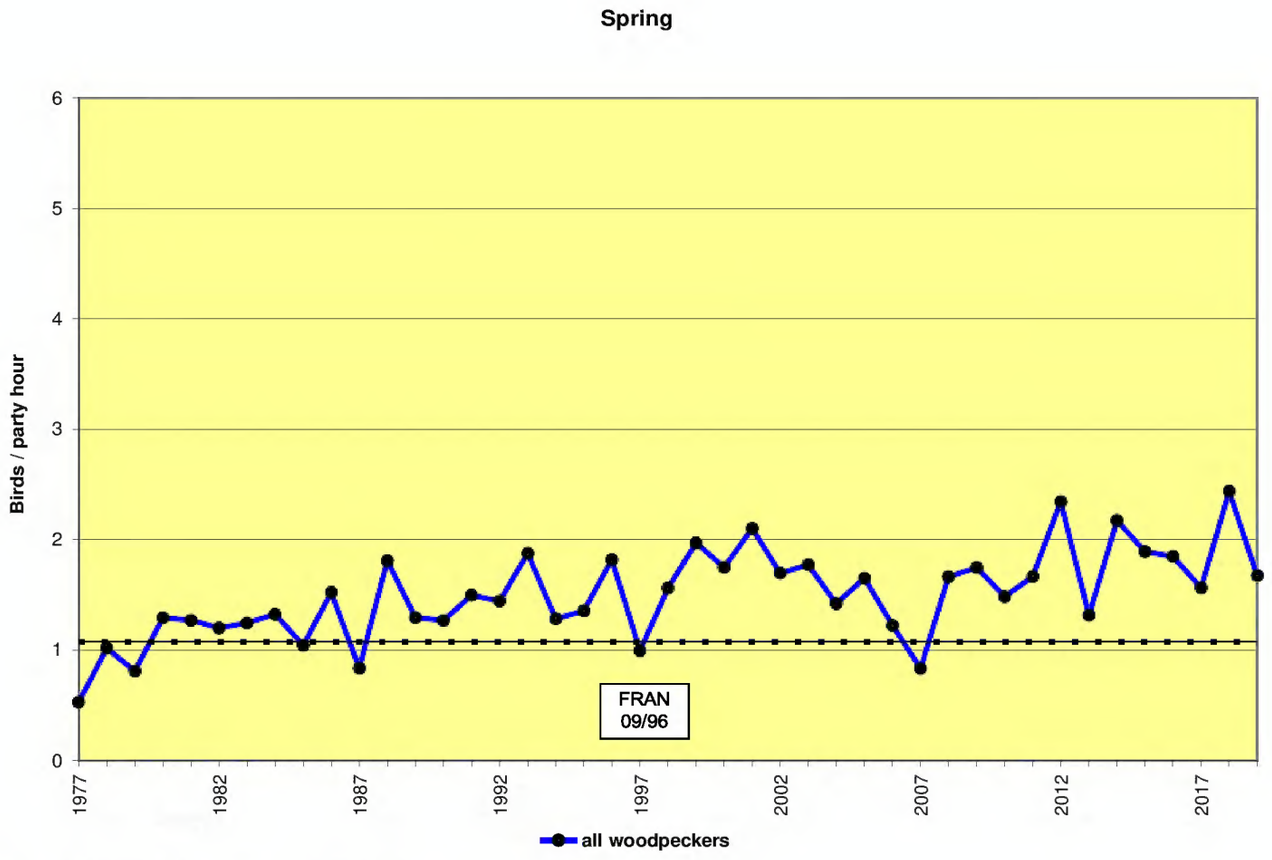

Figure 3. SBC, all woodpeckers

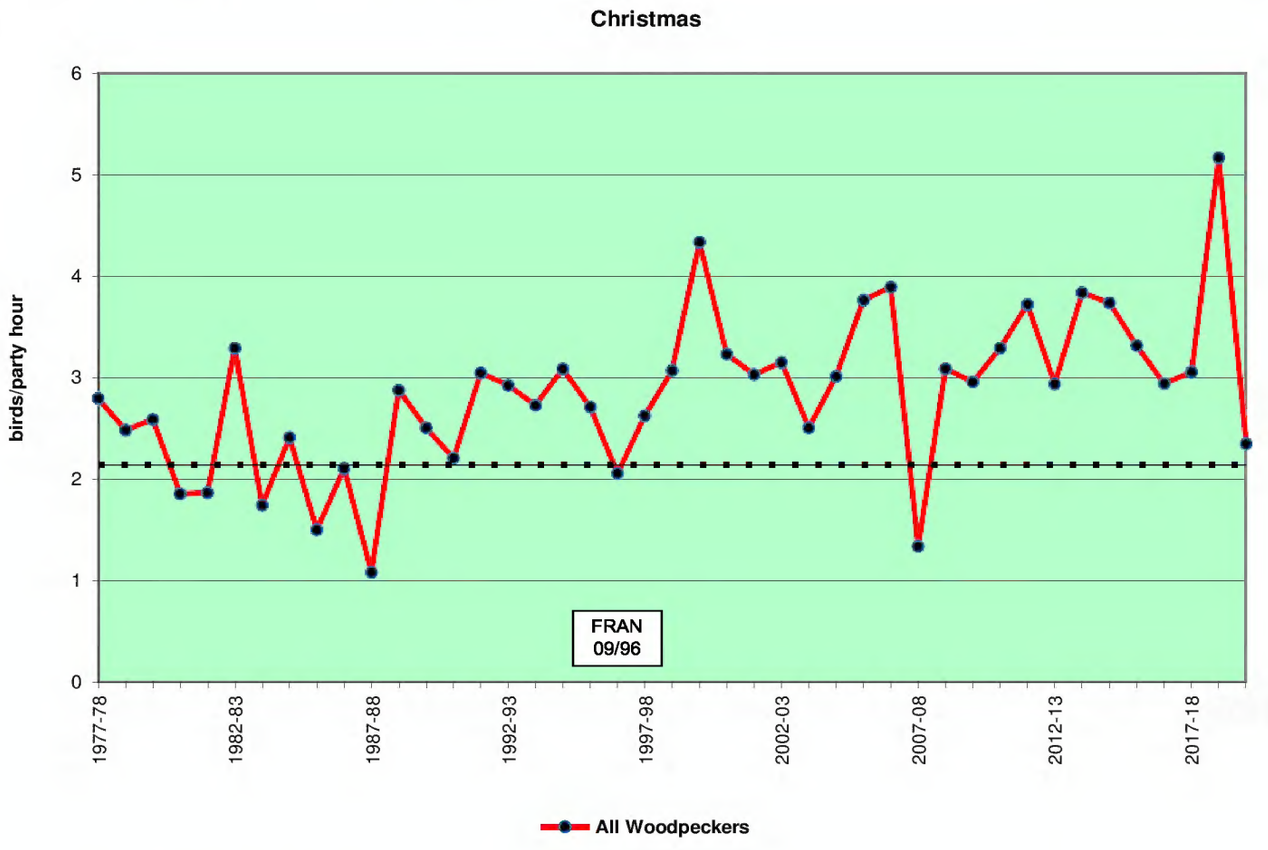

Figure 4. CBC, all woodpeckers

Figures 3 and 4 show these same data with the addition of trend lines that indicate a gradual increase in overall numbers of all woodpecker species over time. Why? "Why" questions are difficult to answer for biological systems in general and for populations in particular. The external influences on these systems tend to be complex. Are there more, older trees now than 40 years ago? Do those trees harbor more insects for woodpeckers to eat? Have there been changes in land use practices in the count circle over these 40+ years—for example, are there now more residential areas with trees and fewer farms with their open spaces? Also, why have more total woodpeckers been observed in winter than in spring?

Some of our woodpecker species are quite common, while others are relatively uncommon. It might be helpful to look at individual species as opposed to aggregating them all together. Perhaps we might find answers there. Of course, more questions might then arise. (The graphs below all use the same vertical scale for ease of comparison. Note however that it is different from the scale used in the previous graphs because the numbers are lower.)

Figure 5. Red-bellied Woodpecker (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*)

Our most common woodpecker species is the Red-bellied Woodpecker. The red belly on these birds is not always easily seen, and in fact it may be absent altogether in females or young birds. The male in Figure 5 is showing his red belly quite prominently. Red- bellieds are generalist woodpeckers, feeding on fruits and acorns as well as insects. They typically do not drill into trees in search of prey. They also do quite well around humans and human-made changes to the environment—residential areas, parks, etc. (Miller et al. 2020).

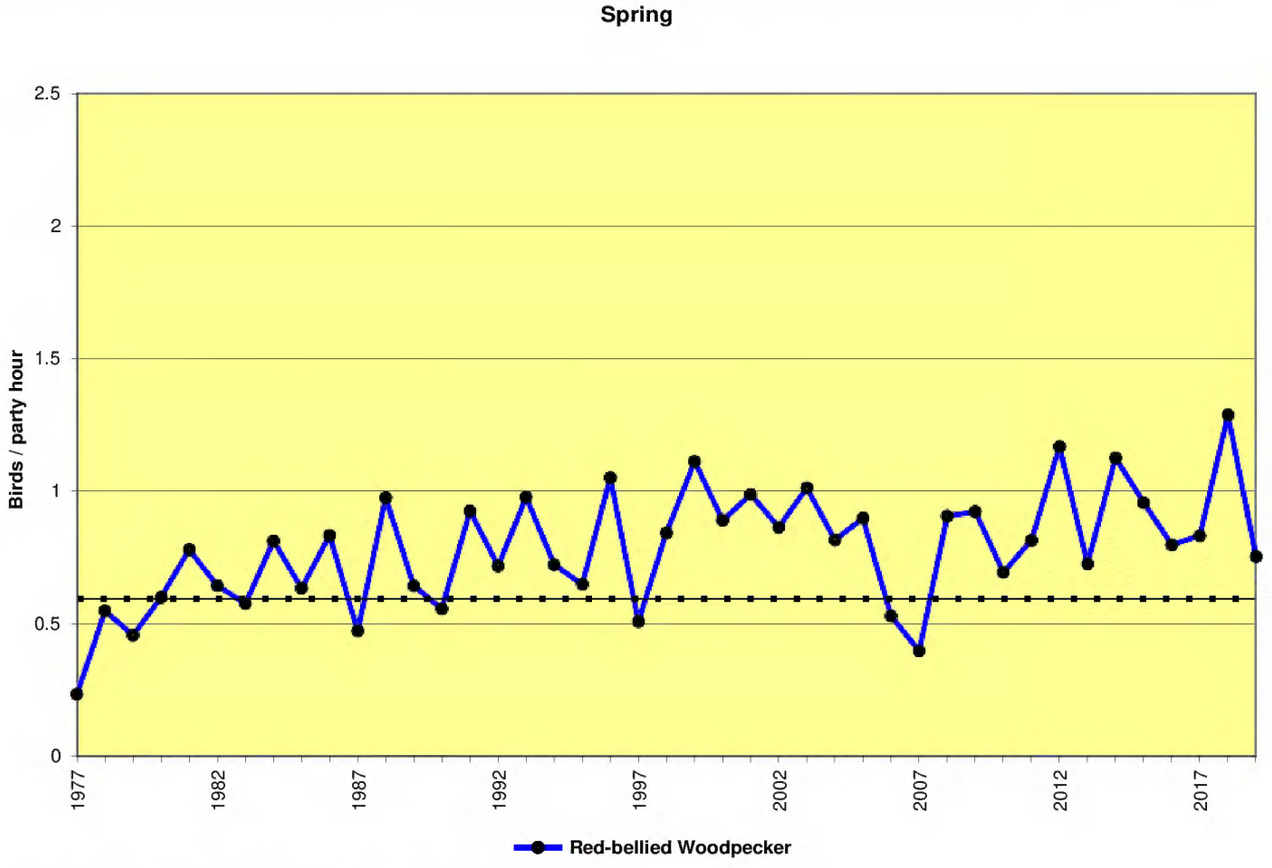

Figure 6. SBC, Red-bellied Woodpecker

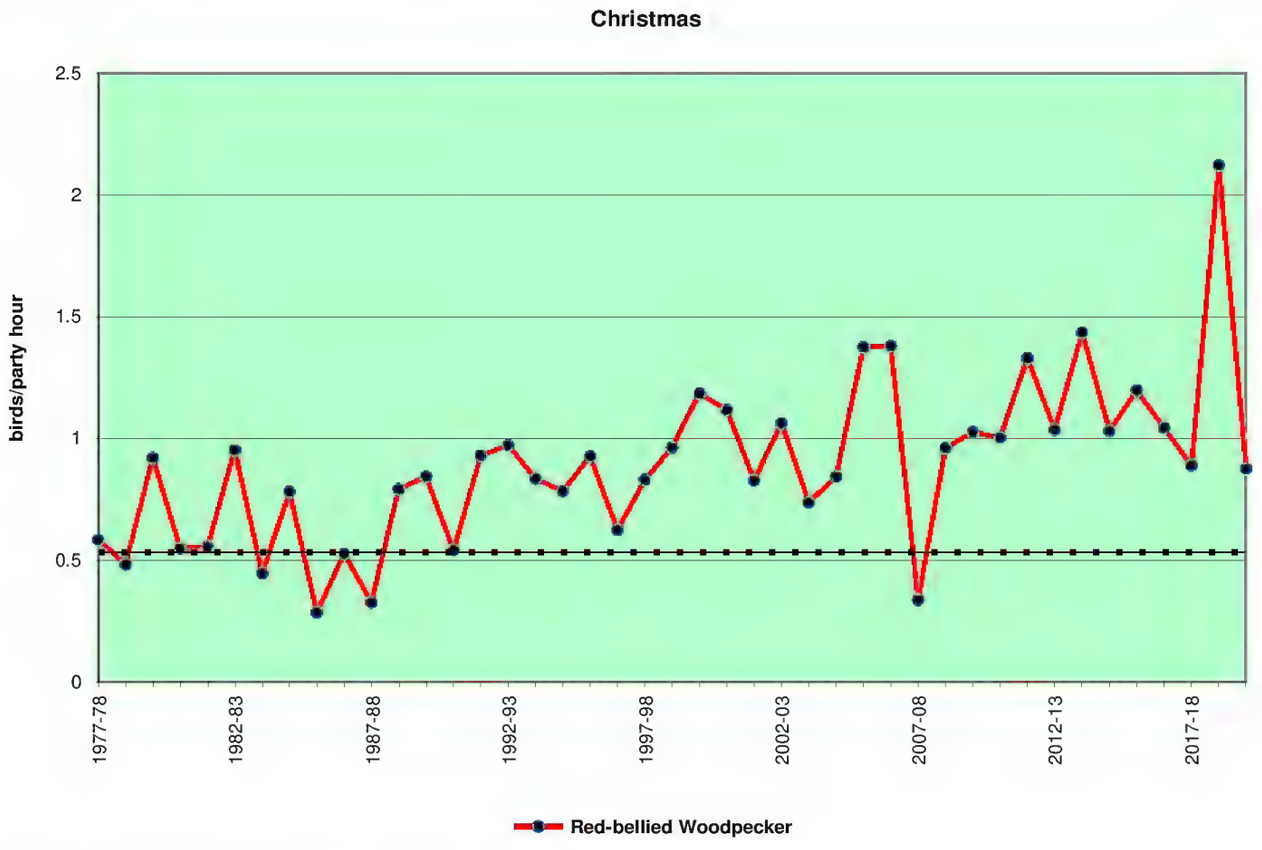

Figure 7. CBC Red-bellied Woodpecker

Figures 6 and 7 are graphs of the spring (SBC) and Christmas (CBC) counts, respectively. The trend lines show that the population of this species has been increasing steadily over the years. Some dips occur in the numbers, but whether these are related to hurricanes or to weather constraints on observers is difficult to discern. The overall trend, however, clearly indicates increasing numbers.

Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*)

The next most common woodpecker in our area is the Downy Woodpecker. It is our smallest woodpecker and feeds on a wide range of insects, gleaning them from surfaces and crevices in branches as well as drilling shallow holes in trees to find them (Jackson and Ouellet 2020).

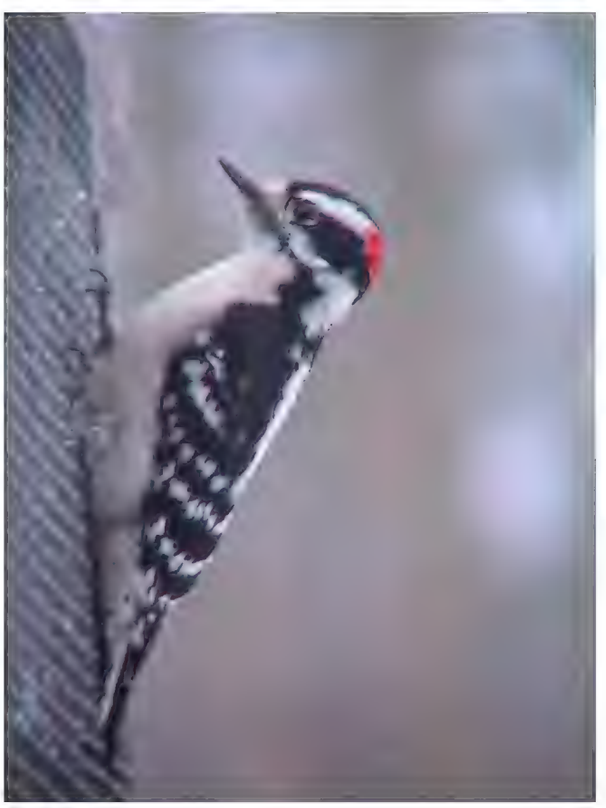

Figure 8. Downy Woodpecker (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

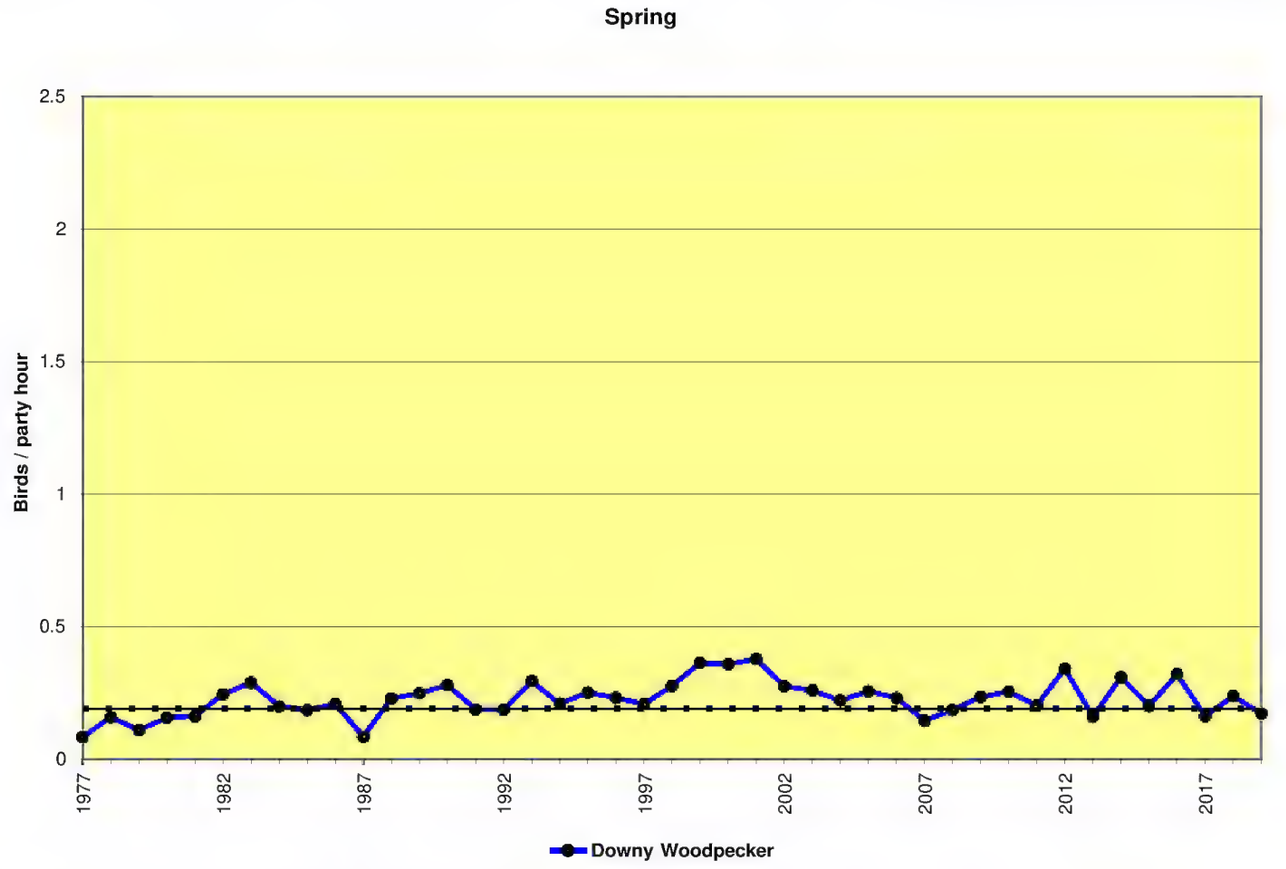

Figure 9. SBC, Downy Woodpecker

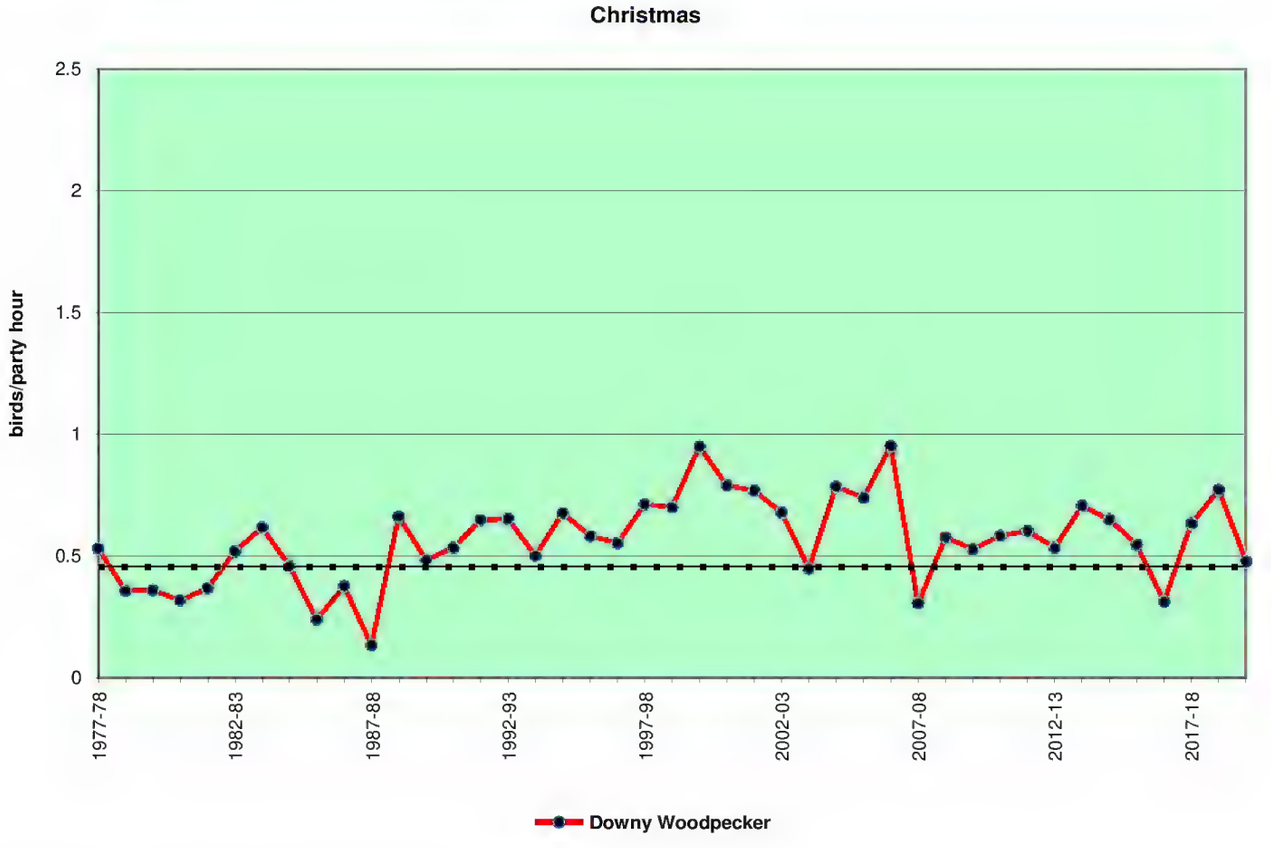

Figure 10. CBC, Downy Woodpecker

Figures 9 and 10 show that the population of Downy Woodpecker has remained quite stable over the years. A bit of a rise in the winter numbers can be seen, perhaps due to increases in numbers of young birds post-breeding. However, winter mortality seems to drop those numbers back so that the breeding population appears fairly constant.

Figure 11. Northern Flicker (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)

Our other relatively common woodpecker is the Northern Flicker, also sometimes called the Yellow-shafted Flicker, referring to the bright yellow feather shafts in its flight feathers. Flickers are migratory, and although we do have breeders here in the spring and summer, their numbers swell in winter when migrants from further north arrive in thefall. Though flickers nest in tree holes like other woodpeckers, they spend most of their feeding time on or near the ground where they forage for ants and other ground-dwelling insects.

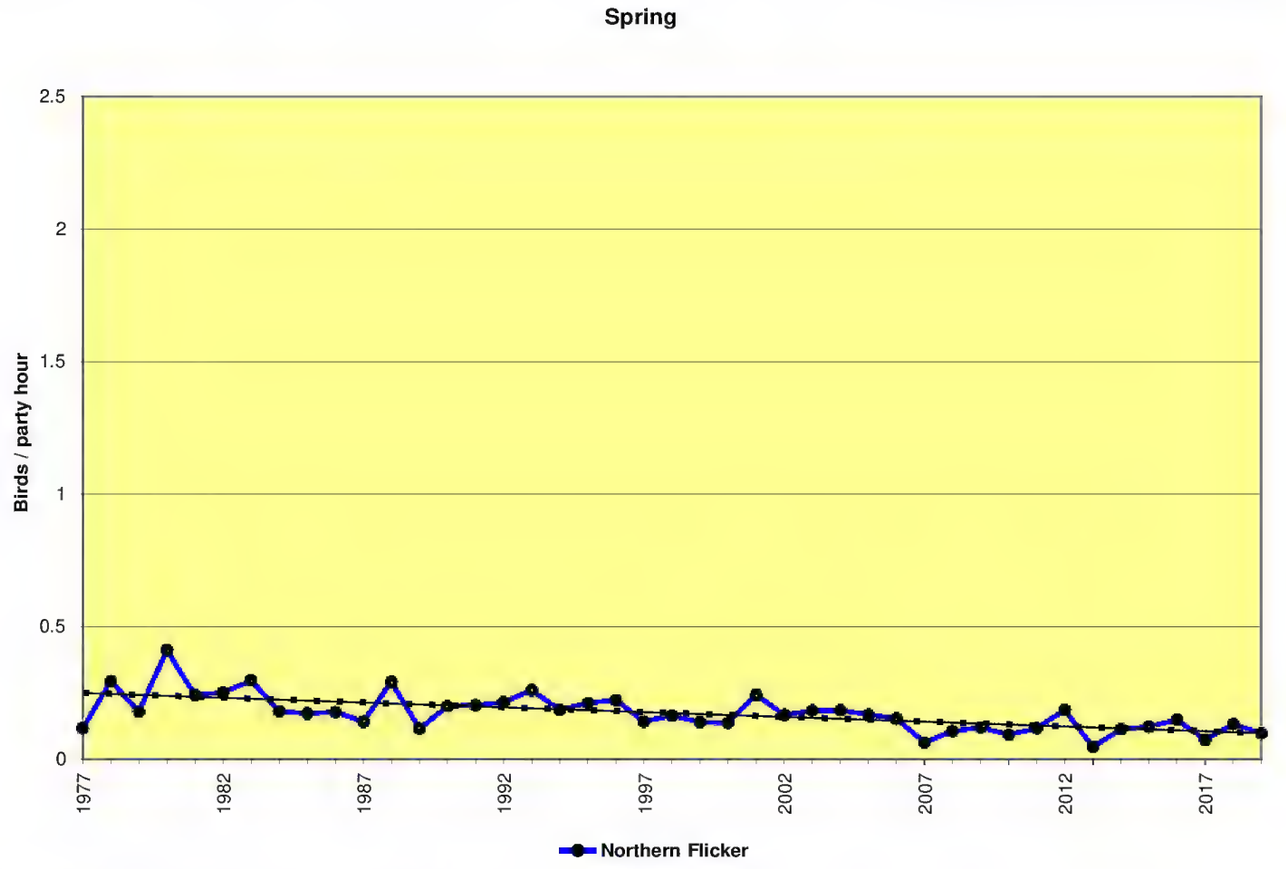

Figure 12. SBC, Northern Flicker

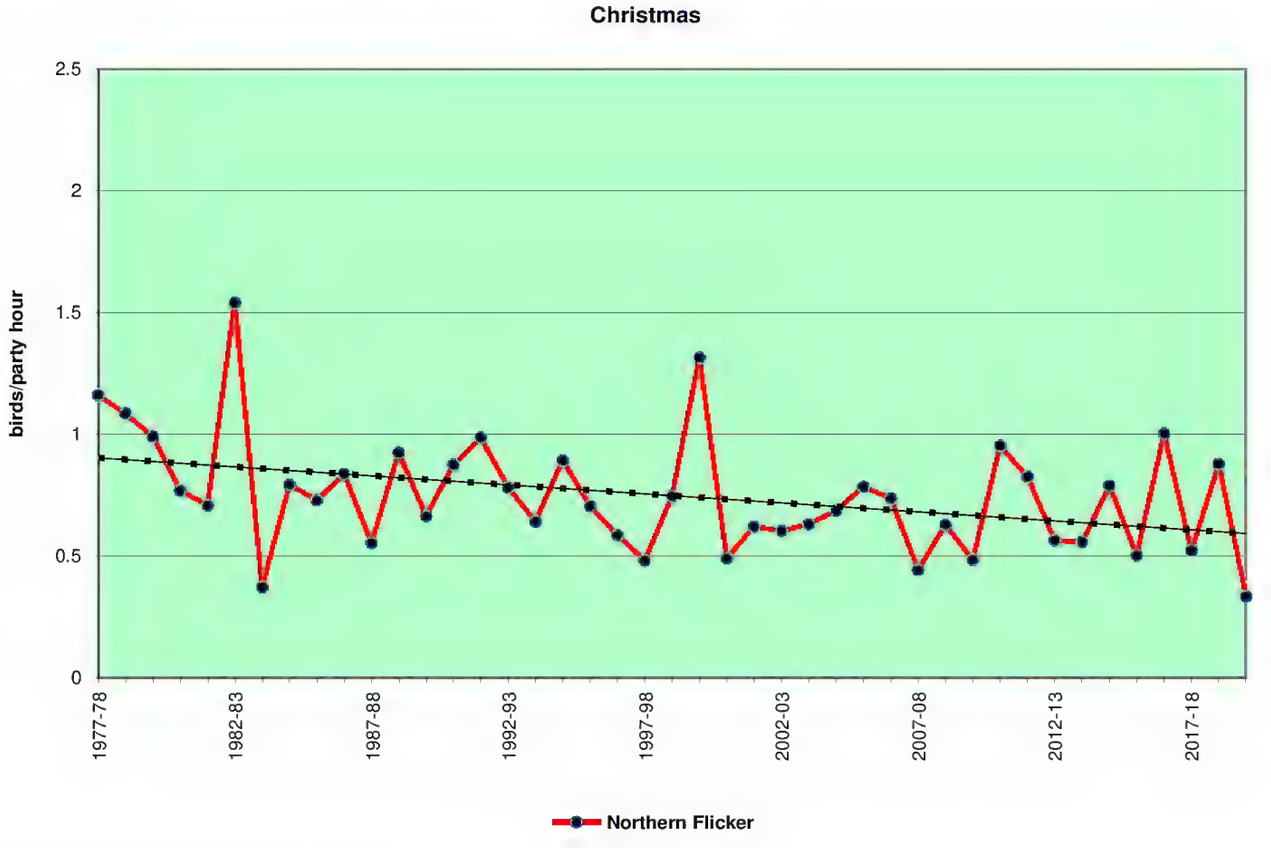

Figure 13. Northern Flicker

A look at Figures 12 and 13 reveals that although this species is considered abundant, its number are clearly declining, both in the breeding season and in the winter. This trend appears to be true throughout its range, not just in our count circle (Wiebe and Moore 2020). Habitat changes due to human activities and competition for nest holeswith European Starlings are likely explanations.

Figure 14. Red-headed Woodpecker (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*)

The Red-headed Woodpecker is not as common in our area as in other parts of its range across North America (Frei et al. 2020). However, its numbers here have shown a steady increase during the course of our local data gathering (Figs. 15 and 16).

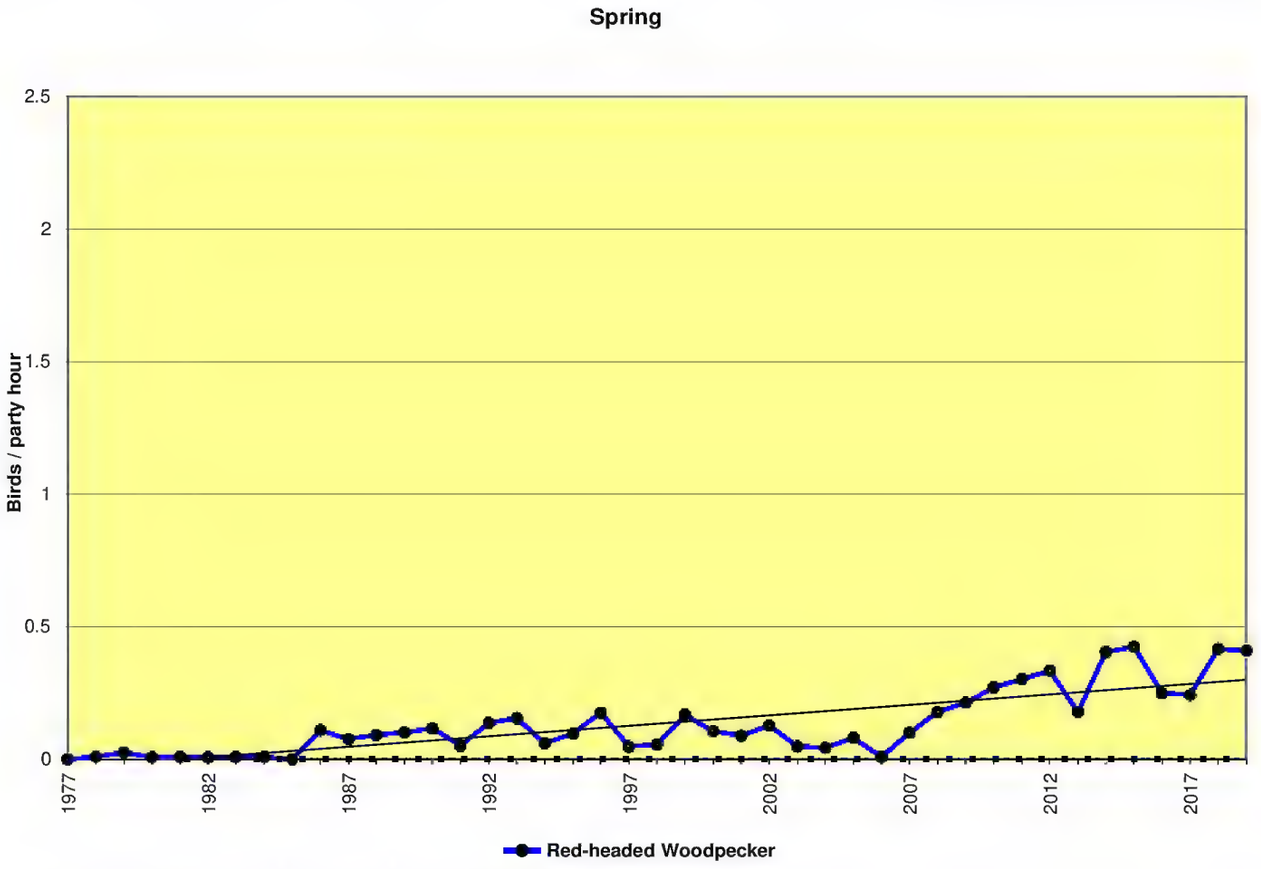

Figure 15. SBC, Red-headed Woodpecker

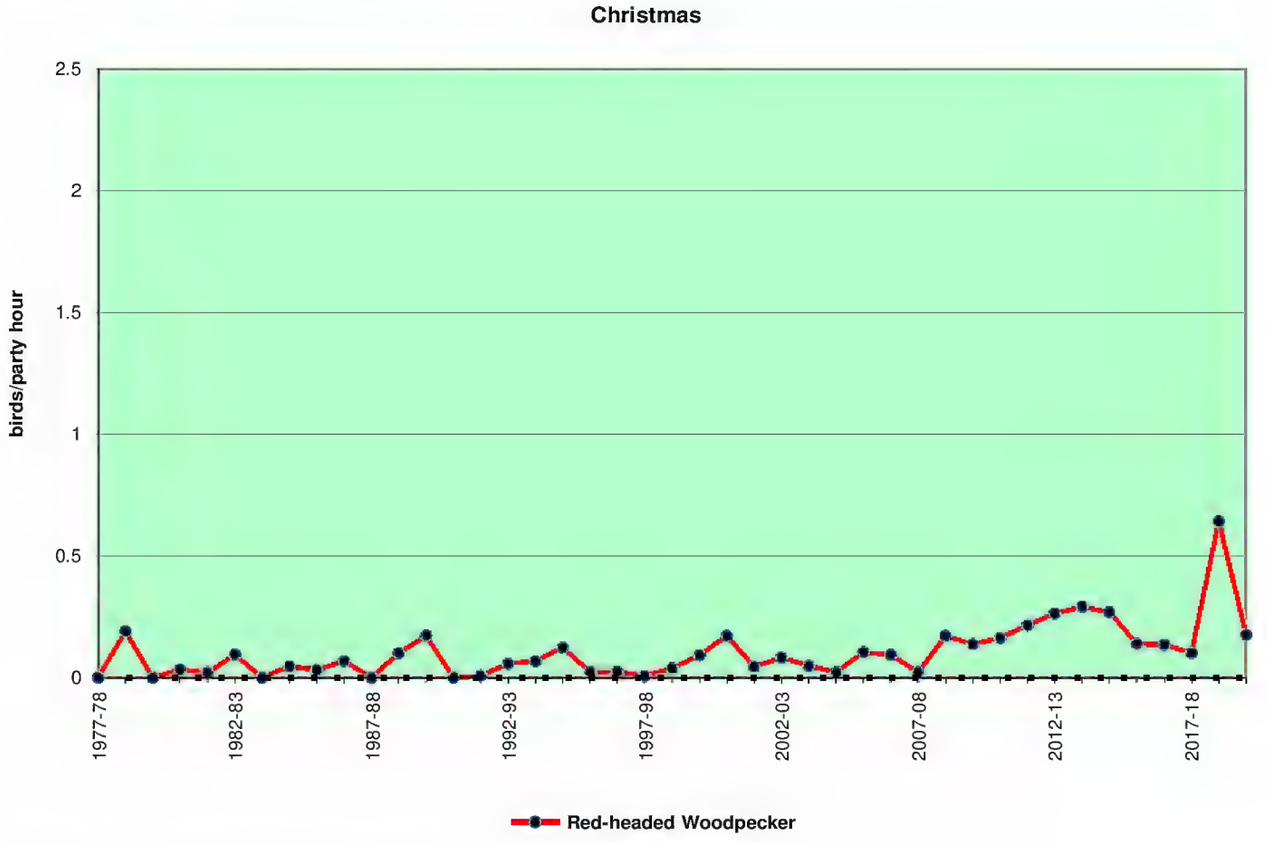

Figure 16. CBC, Red-headed Woodpecker

Red-headed Woodpeckers are hole nesters, being particularly fond of dead trees and dead branches. After Jordan Lake was filled, many swampy areas were created aroundthe edges and in creek and stream tributaries. Beavers have also moved in, further backing up water with their dams. The high waters in these areas resulted in large numbers of dead trees, and it appears the Red-headed Woodpeckers have taken advantageof the habitat.

Figure 17. Hairy Woodpecker (photograph, Carol Tuskey)

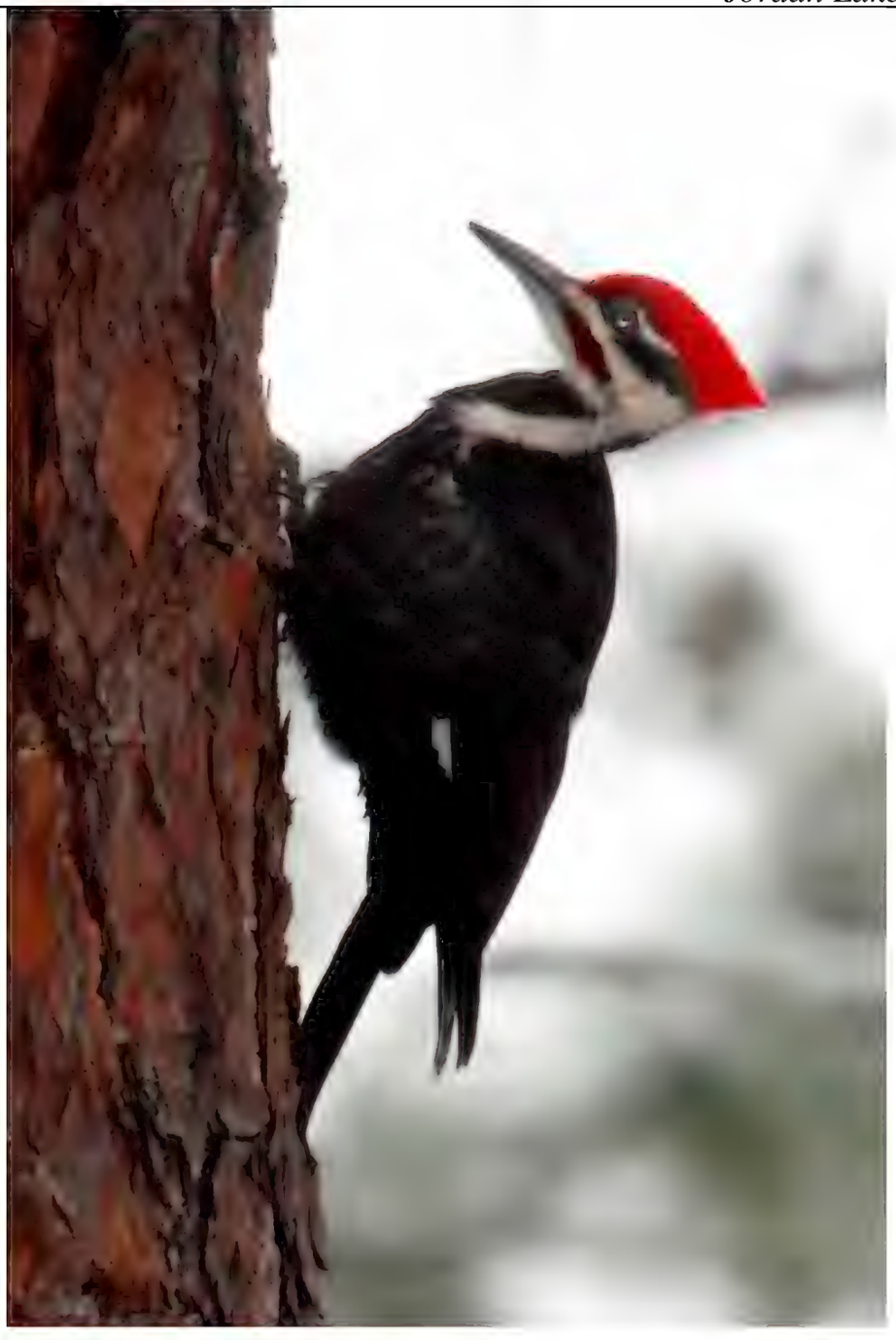

Figure 18. Pileated Woodpecker (photograph, Vern Bothwell)

Hairy Woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus*)
Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)
These two woodpecker species are permanent residents in our area, though in lownumbers relative to the species mentioned above. Both species prefer more mature forestswith older, larger trees.

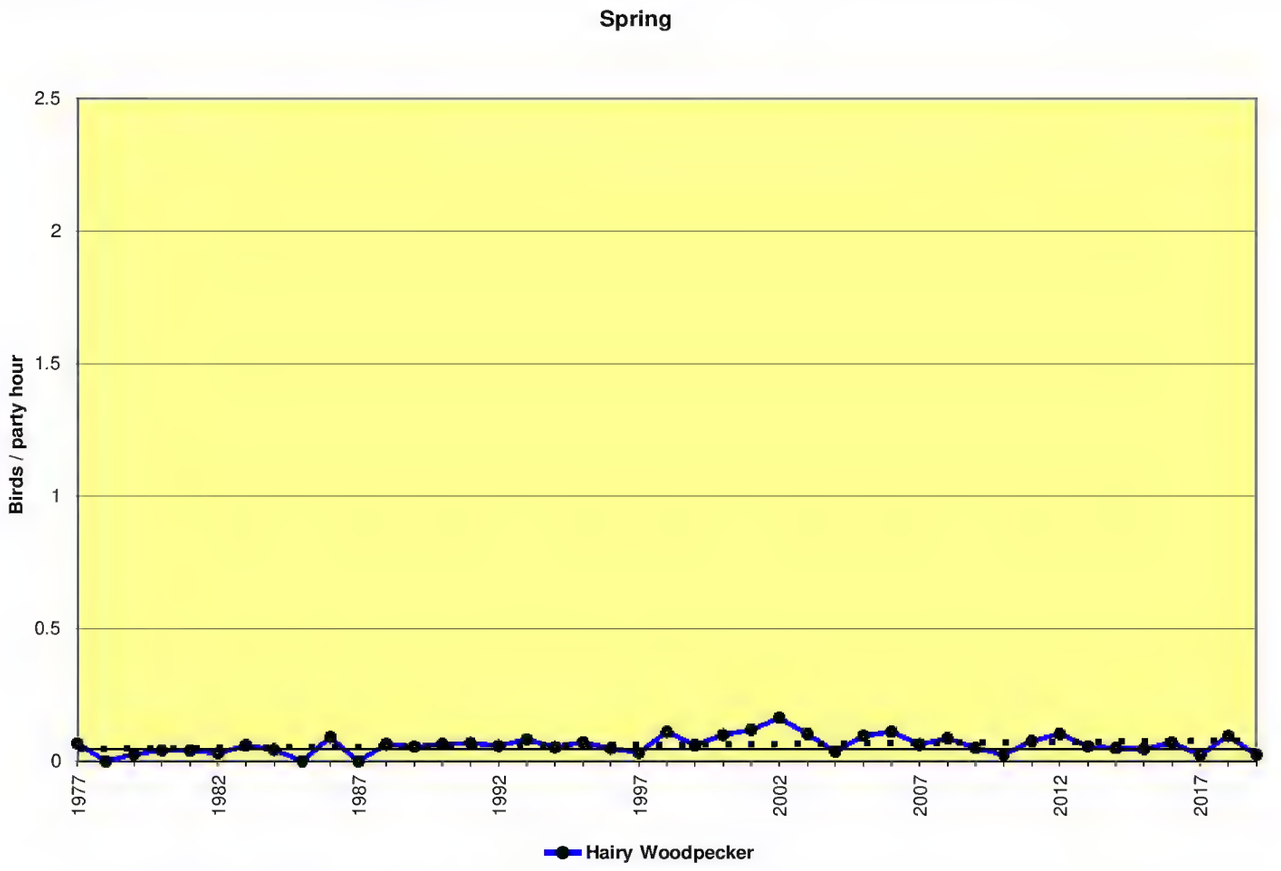

Figure 19. SBS, Hairy Woodpecker

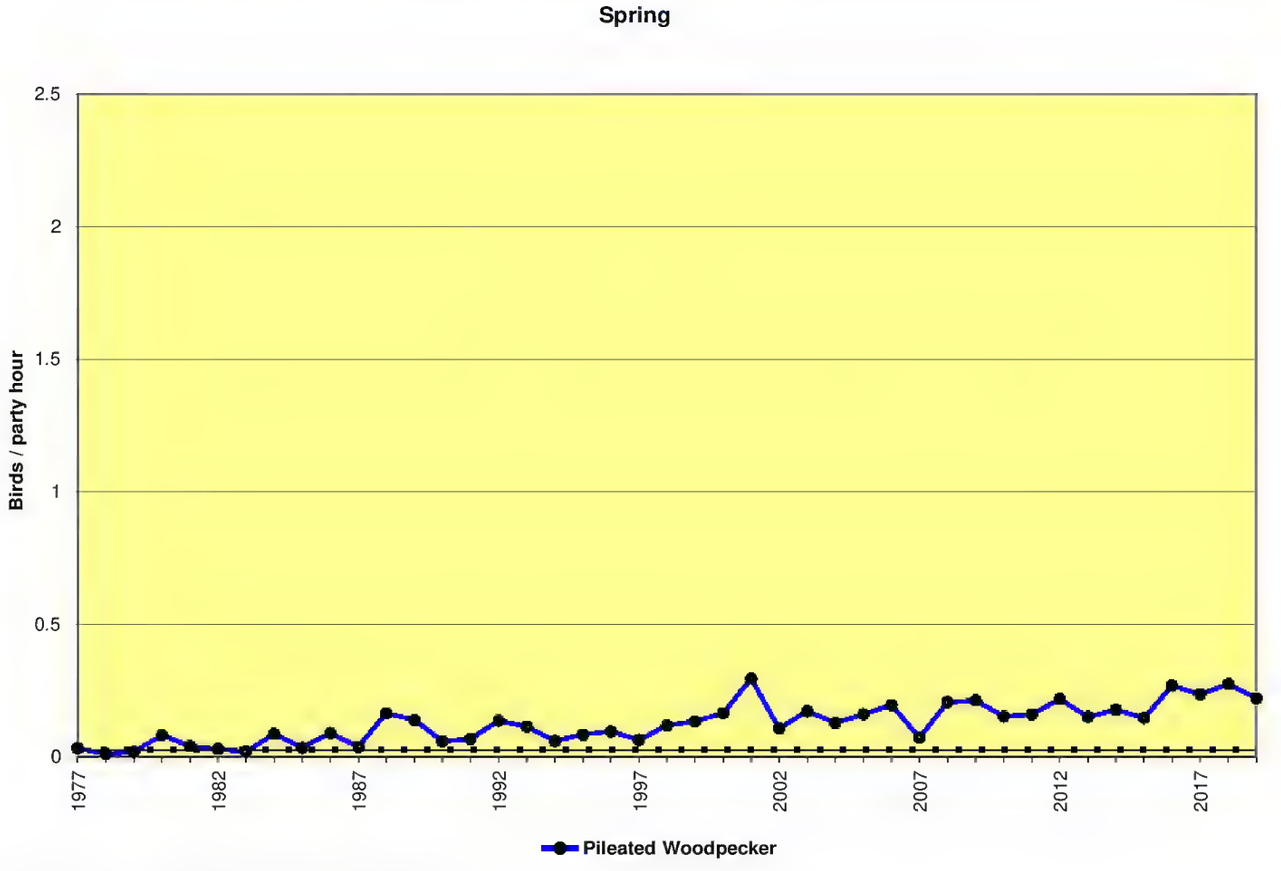

Figure 20. Pileated Woodpecker

Figures 19 and 20 show that the population of Hairy Woodpecker has remained low but stable throughout the past 40 years, while the population of Pileated Woodpecker has increased a bit. (The CBC graphs for these two species are almost identical to the SBC graphs.) Maturing forests in the count circle might account for the latter increase, but then why wouldn't the former show a similar increase?

Figure 21. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*)

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers come to our part of North Carolina only in the winter. They migrate north in the spring to breed. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are unusual woodpeckers in that they drill arrays of small, shallow holes in trees. These holes eventually exude sap from these 'sapsucker wells.' When the sapsuckers return to their wells, they drink the sap and eat any insects that have been attracted to the liquid. Other birds and even mammals take advantage of these special resources (Fig. 22).

Figure 22. Carolina Chickadee feeding at Yellow-bellied Sapsucker wells in a Sugar Maple (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

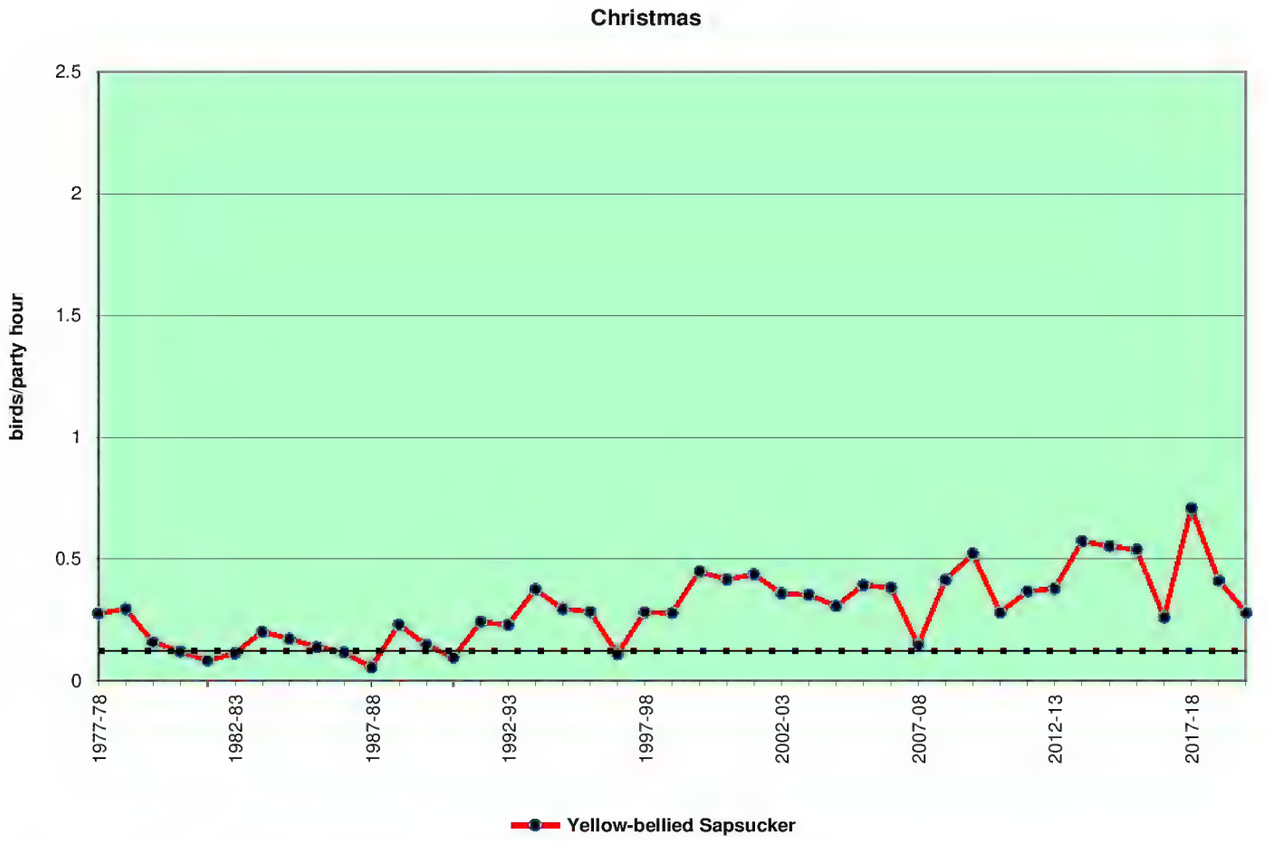

Figure 23. CBC, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Figure 23 shows that this species has also been on the increase over the years. Whether this trend is due to increased breeding success further north or to increased attractiveness of our maturing forests is anybody's guess.

Discussion

It does not appear that we can attribute fluctuations in population sizes in the short term to particular events (e.g., hurricanes) because the variability of census coverage could be overwhelming those data. On the other hand, 40-plus years of data allows us to see trends in population changes that are not subject to short-term variations in censusing effort. The increase in woodpecker numbers (over all species) seems to correlate most obviously to the increase in numbers of Red-bellied Woodpeckers (compare Figures 3 and 4 with Figures 6 and 7).

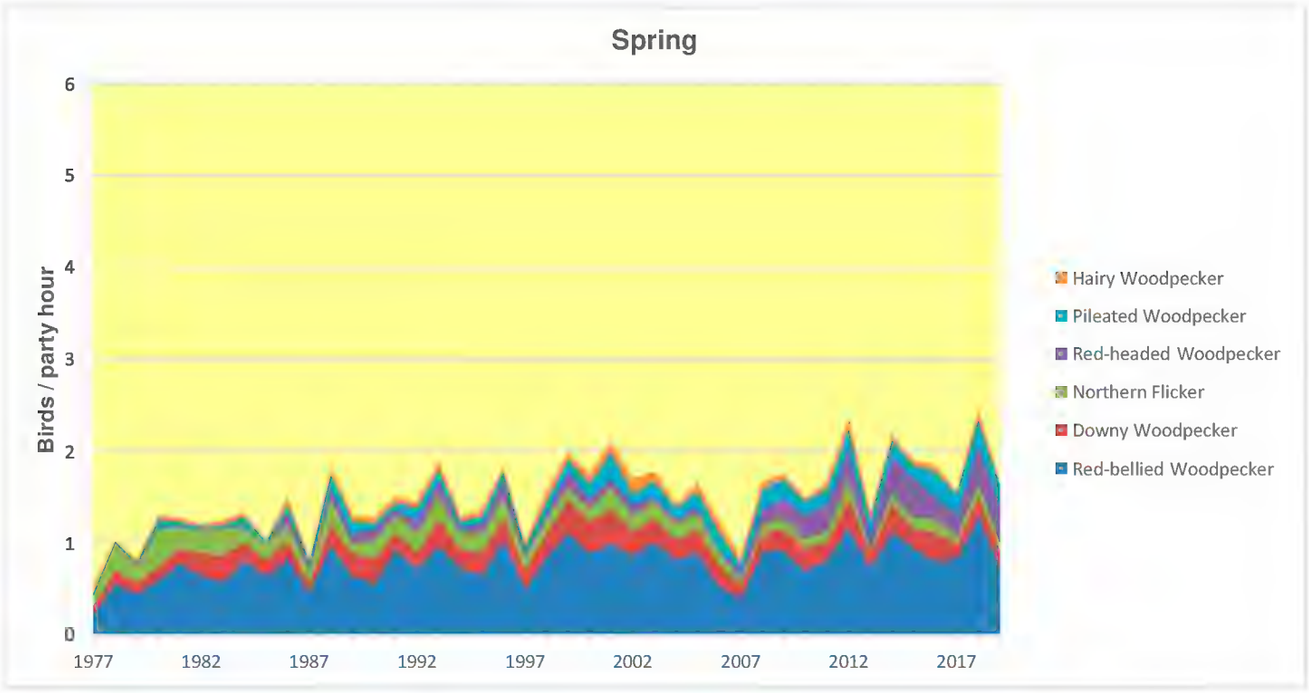

Figure 24. SBC, All Breeding Woodpeckers

Figure 24 shows this relationship another way. The area under the line for each species represents its abundance. The species are stacked with the most common species (Red-bellied Woodpecker) on the bottom and the least common species (Hairy Woodpecker) on the top. Note that the area for Red-bellied Woodpecker (blue) appears to be about equal to the sum of the areas of all the other species put together. Red-belliedWoodpeckers seem to thrive in areas where humans have reworked the landscape— residential areas and parks, for example—as well as in the forested areas common in the count circle. The increasing numbers of other woodpecker species contribute to the overall increase as well, but to a lesser degree.

Winter population numbers for all woodpecker species taken together (see Figs. 3 and 4) and for some particular species are greater than spring population numbers. The larger numbers on CBCs are probably due to young birds born during the previous breeding season. Winter mortality probably accounts for the decreases seen by the following spring. Though Northern Flicker numbers have declined, this decrease has not counterbalanced the overall increase in woodpeckers as a whole. Flicker decline is not a local phenomenon; it appears to be happening throughout the species' range in North America.

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BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Fall 2020, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	*December 1–February 28*	*due March 20*
Spring	*March 1–May 31*	*due June 20*
Summer	*June 1–July 31*	*due August 20*
Fall	*August 1–November 30*	*due December 20*

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location),and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **et al.** – and others, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area

All italicized place names are counties.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: Breeding likely took place on private property along the Northeast Cape Fear River in central *Pender* NC this year, as a hen was seen alongside three chicks there 24 Oct (Ken Ashe). Four in Morehead City *Carteret* NC 6 Aug (Steven Howell), two on a pond along US-64 in Woodley *Tyrrell* NC 11 Nov (Keith Camburn), and one in flight over NC-62 in western *Alamance* NC 24 Aug (Andrew Thornton) were also notable for NC.

Snow Goose: 65 in the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 14 Oct (Dale Lambert) was a notable count for that somewhat early date.

Ross's Goose: Individuals were seen and photographed in Mills River *Henderson* NC 23-31 Oct (Elizabeth Fitts, m. obs.), on South Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 28-29 Oct (m. obs.), at the east end of Sunset Beach *Brunswick* NC 15 Nov (Simon Thompson, et al.), and on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 21-22 Nov (Greg Hays, Jeff Lemons, et al.).

Greater White-fronted Goose: One was seen and photographed at Morse Park in Lake Lure *Rutherford* NC 27-30 Nov (Dawn & Sean Leahy, m. obs.).

Eurasian Wigeon: One was seen at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 7 Oct (Fleeta Chauvigne, Suzanne Roberts, m. obs.) into winter, with a high count of three drakes there 8 Nov (Ricky Davis). One or two are regular at that site most winters.

Mottled Duck: One seen and photographed at the pond adjacent to Ashley High School *New Hanover* NC 14 Nov through 6 Dec (Jamie Adams, m. obs.) was notable for NC.

Green-winged Teal (Eurasian): A Eurasian race Green-winged Teal was seen on North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 28 Nov through 6 Dec (Jeff Lewis, m. obs.).

Redhead: A drake photographed in South Mills *Camden* NC 5-12 Sep (Marie & Ron Furnish) was unusual for September.

Common Eider: Individuals were seen at seven sites along coast in November, with a first-winter drake around the ferry landing on the west end of Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC3 Nov (Andrew Hawkins) being the earliest.

Harlequin Duck: A hen was seen and photographed around Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC for a couple of hours on the morning 10 Nov (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.).

Surf Scoter: Inland sightings, all of hens or first-winter birds, included two on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC alongside five Black Scoters 1 Nov (Ronan Nicholson), one onLake Julian 6 Nov (Aaron Steed, m. obs.), likely the same individual on nearby Beaver Lake 10 Nov (Jay Wherley, m. obs.), one on a pond along Mebane Bridge Rd in*Rockingham* NC 13 Nov (Marty Wall), and one on Lake Robinson *Greenville* SC 28-29 Nov (Robert Zickus, m. obs.).

White-winged Scoter: Inland sightings included one at Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 1 Nov (Stan & Connie Wulkowicz, Bob Olthoff), one at the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC 2-15 Nov (Jay Chandler, m. obs.), one at the dam on Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 3 Nov (Nan Dewire, et al.), two on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 14 Nov (Greg Hays, Jeff Lemons, et al.), one on Lake Pinehurst *Moore* NC 15 Nov (Kevin Markham), and two on Lake Thurmond *McCormick* SC 15 Nov (Matt Malin).

Black Scoter: Inland sightings included five on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC alongside two Surf Scoters 1 Nov (Ronan Nicholson), two on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 14 Nov (Greg Hays, Jeff Lemons, et al.), and one on Lake Julian 27-30 Nov (John Koon, m. obs.).

Long-tailed Duck: Three on Lake Townsend Guilford NC 14 Nov (Andrew Thornton, et al.) possibly were the same three birds seen on Lake Norman in *Lincoln* and *Mecklenburg* NC 17 Nov (Dennis Kent, et al.). Two on Lake Edgar Brown *Barnwell* SC 27 Nov through 12 Dec (Julie Mobley, m. obs.) were a first for that county.

Common Merganser: 18 on the Tuckasegee River in *Jackson* NC 11 Sep (MeganEberly) provided more evidence of successful breeding along that river this year. Anadult hen photographed at Deer Park Lake in Spruce Pine *Mitchell* NC 3-5 Nov (John Britt) was a first for that county.

Pied-billed Grebe: 354 on Roanoke Rapids Lake *Northampton* NC 5 Nov (Ricky Davis) was a notable concentration of this species.

Red-necked Grebe: Individuals were seen off Vista Point on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 22 Nov (Jonathan Cantrell) and off Rolling View access on Falls Lake *Durham* NC 29 Nov through 6 Dec (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.).

Eared Grebe: One hung around the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC for much of the fall, 7 Sep into winter (Jay Chandler, m. obs.). Another individual was photographed on Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 28 Nov (Steve Patterson).

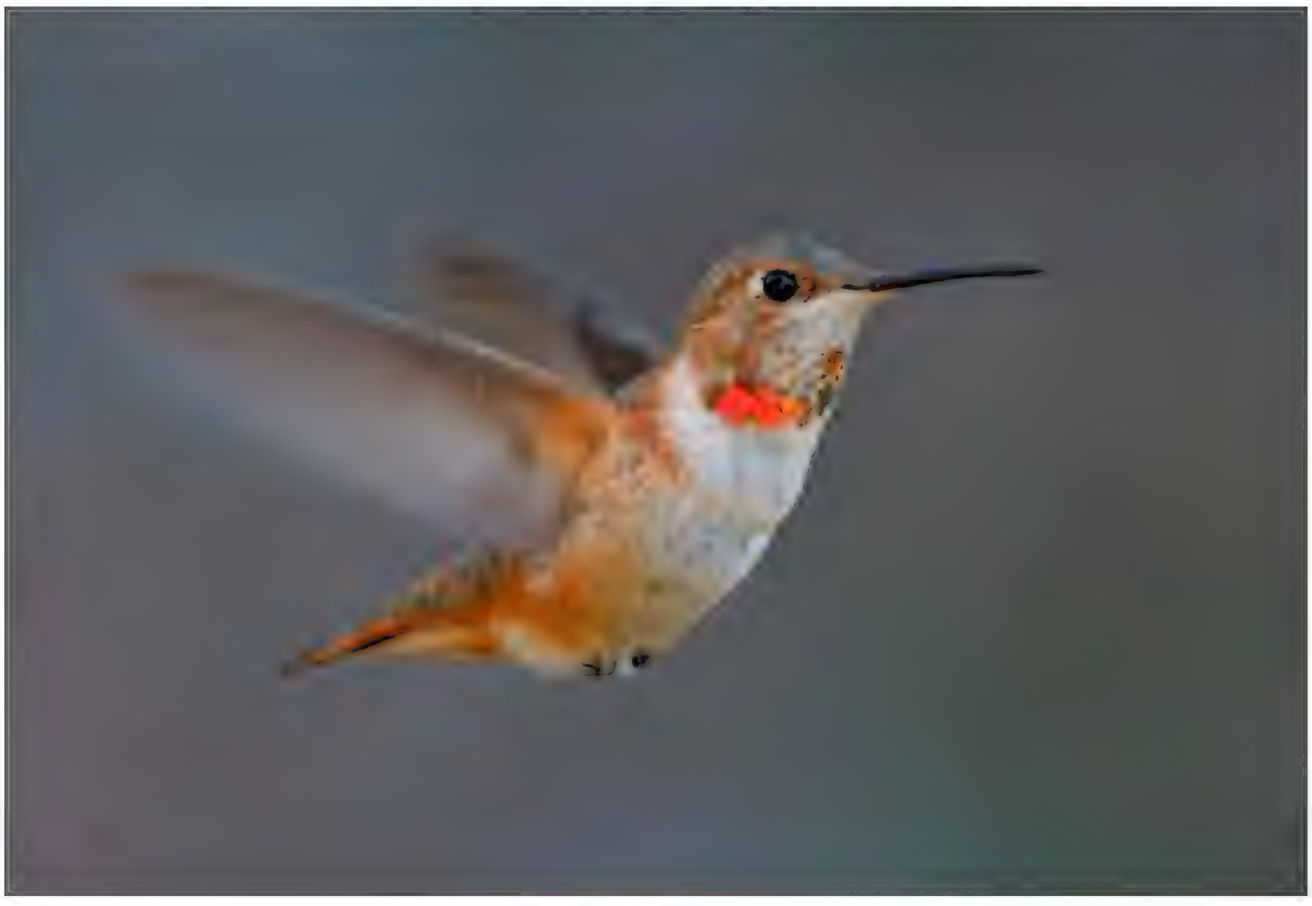
White-winged Dove: One at Fants Grove Waterfowl Area *Anderson* SC 19-20 Aug (Drew Lanham, Steve Patterson, m. obs.) was very unusual for an inland site in early fall. As usual, individuals were seen at about half a dozen sites along the coast, mostly at feeders, in October and November.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Individuals lingered into November at nine sites along the coast, with one photographed along the Basin Trail at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 21 Nov (Brian Strassburger) being the latest.

Antillean Nighthawk: Already accepted by the NC BRC, the report of an Antillean Nighthawk heard above Cape Point Campground *Dare* NC 8-15 Aug (Josh Southern, m. obs.) provided the third official record for NC. Interestingly, the two previous records, both from the mid-1990s, were made at that same site.

Eastern Whip-poor-will: One flushed along a path near Blue Clay Bike Park *New Hanover* NC 21 Nov (Sam Cooper) was late to depart.

Rufous Hummingbird: Counts of three at two sites were notable—three in the Bean Tract of Riverbend Park Catawba NC 15 Nov and 24 Nov (Dwayne Martin), with two continuing into winter (Martin, m. obs.), and three visiting a feeder in Burnsville Yancey NC (Patricia Millen) where banded 13 Nov (Mark Armstrong), with two also continuing into winter (fide Susan Campbell). A female photographed at a feeder in Holly Ridge Onslow NC 19 Sep (Mark Shields) was only the second for that county. An immature male was banded in Sparta Alleghany NC 6 Nov (Harrol Blevins, Campbell).



Rufous Hummingbird, 4 Dec 2020, Alleghany Co, NC. Photo by Harrol Blevins.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Buff-bellied Hummingbird visiting a yard in Summerville *Dorchester* SC 13 Nov (Marcie Daniels). If accepted, the report would provide the third official record for SC.

Common Gallinule: One seen on Roanoke Rapids Lake *Northampton* NC 5 Nov (Ricky Davis) was locally unusual and a possible first for that county.

Black-necked Stilt: One at Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC following the passage of tropical storm Isaias 4 Aug (Ricky Davis) and three at Silver Bluff Audubon Sanctuary *Aiken* SC 28 Aug (Peter Stangel), with four there 29 Aug (Matt Knepley), were notable for sites so far from the coast.

American Avocet: Sightings were made at seven inland sites in August including a notable count of 13 on the western end of Lake James *McDowell* NC 10 Aug (Art Webster). Two at a pond along Milford Church Rd in *Greenville* SC 8 Oct (BarbHennessy, m. obs.) were a first for that county. Two on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 30 Oct (Jeff Lemons, Jeffrey Turner, Judy Walker) were somewhat late for a site in the Piedmont.

American Golden-Plover: Sightings mostly were typical this fall. Two in a field adjacent to Schenck Forest *Wake* NC 18 Sep (Brian O'Shea) were locally unusual. One hung around on the lawn at the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center *Dare* NC for several weeks where seen by many, 24 Sep (Heather Russell) through 29 Oct (Audrey Whitlock).

Upland Sandpiper: Individuals were reported at about half-a-dozen sites, mostly sod farms, in August and very early September. "Uppies" hung around Vandemark Sod in *Nash* NC for six weeks, 31 Jul through 11 Sep (Ricky Davis, m. obs.), with high countsof six made there 15 Aug and 20 Aug (Davis).

Whimbrel: One photographed at Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 25 Sep (John Koon, m. obs.) was a good find for a site in the mountain region.

Long-billed Curlew: Sightings included one continuing at the Rachel Carson Reserve *Carteret* NC intermittently throughout the period into winter (John Fussell, m. obs.), one on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 9 Aug and 13 Sep (Fussell, et al.), one at Edisto Beach SP *Colleton* SC 11 Aug (Dan Zankman), one at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 14 Aug (Ruben Stoll, et al.), one over Hatteras Inlet on the border of *Dare* and *Hyde* NC 15 Aug (Stoll, et al.), two on East Shackleford Banks 27 Sep intermittently through 21 Oct (Fussell, Steven Howell, m. obs.), and two on the sound-side of Edisto Beach on the border of *Charleston* and *Colleton* SC 12 Oct (Elizabeth Anderegg) with one remaining at that site through 28 Oct (m. obs.).

Bar-tailed Godwit: One, presumably the same individual as past years, returned to East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC for a fifth straight winter by 13 Sep (John Fussell, et al.),

Hudsonian Godwit: "Hudwits" were seen on South Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC for two weeks in late August, 14-29 Aug (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.), with a high count of four made there 17 Aug (Pat Draisey, Peggy Eubank, Whitlock).

Ruddy Turnstone: One photographed in a flooded field along Burma Rd in *Lexington* SC 23 Aug (David Dobson, Irvin Pitts, Jennifer Shockley) was the farthest inland reported this fall and a first for that county.

Sanderling: Inland sightings included one at Vandemark Sod *Nash* NC 24 Aug (Ricky Davis), one at Oak Hollow Lake *Guilford* NC 29 Aug (Andrew Thornton, Matt Wangerin), one at McAlpine WTP *Mecklenburg* NC 1 Sep (Greg Hays, Dennis Kent), four at Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 8 Sep (Ann Prince), one at Vandemark Sod 11-12 Sep (Davis, m. obs.), and one along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 18 Sep (Wayne Forsythe).

Dunlin: Farthest inland were seven at a sod farm in *Transylvania* NC 29 Oct (Frank Porter, et al.), five along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 29 Oct (Bill Hooker, et al.), and one in Clemson *Pickens* SC 16 Nov (Steve Patterson).

Baird's Sandpiper: Sightings included one along Hooper Ln in *Henderson* NC 20-23 Aug (Vicky Burke, Mike Resch, m. obs.), one at Vandemark Sod *Nash* NC 27-28 Aug (Ricky Davis), two at Vandemark Sod 29-30 Aug (David Fischer, m. obs.), and one at theSuper Sod farm in *Orangeburg* SC 6 Sep (Patty Masten, et al.) and 18-21 Sep (Matt Malin, m. obs.).

White-rumped Sandpiper: Individuals along Lancaster Drive in *Oconee* SC 12-13 Sep (Joe Dunkleman, m. obs.) and at Lyman Lake *Spartanburg* SC 27 Sep through 3 Oct (Michael Robertson, m. obs.) were firsts for those counties.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Sightings were made at about a dozen sites this fall, mostly in September. One at the Bishop Branch Turf farm in *Oconee* SC 5 Aug (Scott Davis, m. obs.) was somewhat early and a first for that county.

Short-billed Dowitcher: Inland sightings, all late August through September, involved one along Burma Rd in *Lexington* SC 23-24 Aug (Zach Steinhauser, m. obs.), one in Roaring River *Wilkes* NC 23-24 Aug (Dale Reynolds, m. obs.), two at Mills River Park *Henderson* NC 28 Aug (Kevin Burke, et al.), one at Lyman Lake *Spartanburg* SC 2-4 Sep (Neil Owens, m. obs.), one at Horse Creek WTP *Aiken* SC 12 Sep (Peter Stangel), and five along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 17 Sep (Mike Resch).

Willet: Individuals along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 16 Aug (Mike Resch, m. obs.) and at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 16 Aug (Mel Green) were good finds inland.

Wilson's Phalarope: Sightings involved two in North Charleston *Charleston* SC 1 Aug (Micah Owens), one at Cape Point Campground *Dare* NC 14-16 Aug (Chris Sloan, m. obs.), two at North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 16 Aug (Nathan Gatto, Audrey Whitlock), one at South Pond at Pea Island NWR 27 Aug through 4 Sep (Whitlock, m. obs.), one in South Mills *Camden* NC 29 Aug (Marie & Ron Furnish), and two at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 18 Sep (Steve Calver).

Red-necked Phalarope: Individuals were seen at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 14 Aug (Ruben Stoll, et al.), on South Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 7 Sep (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.), and at the Salt Pond at Cape Point 12 Sep (Chris Thomas, m. obs.). Two were seen at Grandfather Lake *Avery* NC following the passage of remnants of Hurricane Laura 29 Aug (Gordon Warburton, m. obs.). Following the passage of remnants of Hurricane Sally, individuals were seen at Lake Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC 18 Sep (Michael Robertson, m. obs.), at Archie Elledge WTP *Forsyth* NC 18 Sep (Harvey Clodfelter, m. obs.), and at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 18 Sep (Steve Calver).

Common Murre: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report two Common Murres around the jetty at Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 9 Nov (Simon Harvey). If accepted, the report would provide the fourth official record for SC. Notably, this sighting occurred much earlier in the fall/winter season than all previous reports made in the Carolinas.

Black-legged Kittiwake: Sightings involved a first-winter bird photographed on the jetty at Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 10 Nov (Mark McShane), two around Cape Point *Dare* NC 11-15 Nov (Brian Patteson, m. obs.), two on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 14 Nov (Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.), and a first-winter bird at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 26 Nov (Jamie Adams).

Sabine's Gull: Two were reported this fall—an adult seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 6 Sep (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) and a first-year birdseen on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 13 Sep (Steve Coggin, Jeff Lemons, Patty Masten, Martina Nordstrand).

Black-headed Gull: An adult, presumably the same individual that visited the site last winter, returned to Carolina Beach Lake *New Hanover* NC 7 Nov (Jamie Adams). An adult photographed at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 13 Nov (Simon Thompson, et al.) may have been that same individual.

Laughing Gull: Somewhat late for sites away from the coast were three on Roanoke Rapids Lake *Northampton* NC 19 Nov (Ricky Davis), one on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 20-22 Nov (Jeff Lemons, m. obs.), and one on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 28 Nov (Matt Spangler).

Herring Gull: One along Hooper Ln *Henderson* 29-31 Oct (Wayne Forsythe, TimNovak) was the farthest inland reported this fall.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Individuals on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* 15 Aug (Taylor Piephoff) and 5 Oct (Jeff Lemons, et al.) were good finds for a site so far inland.

Brown Noddy: One seen and photographed near shore during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 8 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was a great find.

Sooty Tern: Ten on Lake Waccamaw *Columbus* NC 4 Aug (Ed Corey) and two near Tarboro *Edgecombe* NC 4 Aug (Trevor Sleight), both following the passage of Hurricane Isaias, were good finds inland. 150 on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 7 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was a notable count.

Bridled Tern: One on Lake Waccamaw *Columbus* NC following the passage of Hurricane Isaias 4 Aug (Ed Corey) was a good find away from the ocean.

Least Tern: 54 on Lake Waccamaw *Columbus* NC following the passage of Hurricane Isaias 4 Aug (Ed Corey) was a notable count for a site away from the coast.

Common Tern: One photographed at Cape Point *Dare* NC 18 Nov (Megan Baker, Michael Gosselin) was rather late for the northern part of our coast.

White-tailed Tropicbird: A juvenile was photographed resting on the beach at Hammocks Beach SP *Onslow* NC 12 Aug (Jacob Vitak).

Red-throated Loon: One photographed on the lake at YMCA Camp Harrison *Wilkes* NC 24 Nov (Guy McGrane) was notable for an inland lake.

Pacific Loon: One was seen on the ocean in Nags Head *Dare* NC 20-21 Nov (Andrew Thornton, Matt Wangerin). Four among 500-600 Common Loons off Figure Eight Island *New Hanover* NC 28 Nov (Derb Carter) was a notable count.

Trindade Petrel: Four were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC this fall—a light-morph bird 22 Aug, an intermediate-morph bird 5 Sep, and two, one light-morph bird and one dark-morph bird, 6 Sep (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Fea's Petrel: One was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 15 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Cory's Shearwater: 218 flying northeast over Cape Point *Dare* NC 11 Oct (Peter Flood, Kate Sutherland) was a notable count from shore.

Great Shearwater: 427 on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 28 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was a notable count.

Audubon's Shearwater: 504 on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 10 Oct (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was a notable count.

Wood Stork: Post-breeding dispersal resulted in sightings as far inland as *Henderson* NC, where one, possibly the same individual seen in *Macon* and *Transylvania* in July, was seen near the WTP in Mills River 1 Aug (Tim Novak, m. obs.), and as far north as *Orange* NC, where one was photographed in flight over Chapel Hill 30 Aug (Ryan Bakelaar, et al.)

Magnificent Frigatebird: Individuals were seen over multiple sites along the coast this fall. Atypically, more sightings were made in the second half of the period than the first. One seen over the Pungo River near Wades Point *Beaufort* NC 24 Oct (Ed Corey) was very unusual for a site so far from the coast, especially when not following the passage ofa tropical storm. Individuals over Nags Head *Dare* NC 26 Nov (Sarah Toner) and at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 30 Nov (Michael Adams, m. obs.) were unusual so late in the season.

Masked Booby: An adult seen among gulls following a shrimp boat off North Topsail Beach *Onslow* NC 21 Oct (Gilbert Grant) was a great find.

Brown Booby: Juvenile individuals were seen just beyond the surf in Kill Devil Hills *Dare* NC 3 Aug (Joshua Uffman) and off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 26 Aug (VernBothwell, Clarke French). On pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC, a juvenile was seen 22 Aug and two or three, an adult and one or two juveniles, were seen 28 Aug (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). Pending review by the SC BRC are two reports—a sub-adult around the dam on Lake Thurmond *McCormick* SC 17 Sep through 29 Oct (Milton Hobbs, m. obs.) and a juvenile on the ocean 35 miles southeast of Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC 26 Sep (Steve Calver, et al.). Pending review by the NC BRC is the very unusual report of an apparent juvenile Brown Booby photographed sitting atop a chicken coop in *Stanly* NC 28 Sep (Martha O'Tuel).

American White Pelican: Locally unusual were 49 in flight over *Aiken* SC 1 Oct (Julie Mobley), 48, possibly the same flock seen over *Aiken*, over Lake Thurmond in *McCormick* SC 17 Oct (Kimberly Turner), two on Lake Wateree *Kershaw* SC in mid- October (*fide* Bob Wood), 36 on the pond at Blue Ridge Community College *Henderson* NC 28 Oct (Vicky Burke, m. obs.), one over Harris Lake *Wake* 31 Oct (Susan Campbell),three on Lake Norman in *Iredell* and *Mecklenburg* NC 1 Nov (Greg Hays, Jeff Lemons,et al.), likely the same three individuals in flight over I-40 in *Davie* NC later that same day (Trevor Sleight), 23 in flight over northeastern *York* SC 1 Nov (Gretchen Locy), five on Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 11 Nov (Steve Patterson), and one over W. Kerr Scott Reservoir *Wilkes* NC 28 Nov (Monte & Brenda Combs). 220 in flight over the Cape Fear River at Carolina Beach SP *New Hanover* NC 14 Nov (Jesse Anderson) was a notable count.

Brown Pelican: Following the passage of Hurricane Isaias, three were seen on Lake Waccamaw *Columbus* NC 4 Aug (Ed Corey, Andrew Thornton) and one was seen on Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 4 Aug (Ricky Davis, m. obs.).

Least Bittern: One photographed at a farm pond near Hot Springs *Madison* NC 7 Sep (Carlton Burke, Gail Lankford) was very unusual for the mountain region and a first for that county.

Great Blue Heron (white morph): Individual "Great White Herons" were seen along the Watauga River just northwest of Valle Crucis *Watauga* NC continuing from summer through 13 Sep (Maxwell Ramey) and at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 6 Aug (Carl Engstrom, et al.) through 20 Aug (Steve Howell).

Tricolored Heron: One seen along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 29 Aug (Gary Harbour, Tim Novak, Mike Resch) was a good find for the mountain region.

Reddish Egret: Eight, six dark morph birds and two white morph birds, at East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 13 Sep (John Fussell, et al.) was a notable count of NC. Three remained at that site through 10 Oct (Matt Spangler). An adult photographed at Hatteras Inlet *Dare* NC 27-30 Sep (Jim Loftus) was the northernmost report. One lingered on the Fish Haul Creek end of Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC until 15 Dec (John Bloomfield).

Cattle Egret: 12 at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 23 Oct (Denise Hargrove, Jay Wherley, m. obs.) were unusual for the mountain region, especially so late in the season.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: A juvenile seen and photographed near Madison *Oconee* SC 21-27 Aug (Scott Davis) was a first for that county.

White Ibis: Locally unusual were 19 in *Cleveland* NC 4 Aug (Bill Hooker), four near Moravian Falls *Wilkes* 5-14 Aug (Guy McGrane), and four on Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 29 Aug (Bob Olthoff).

Glossy Ibis: Individuals in flight over Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 14 Sep (Tom Bush, m. obs.) and over the entrance road to Grandfather Mountain *Avery* NC 30 Sep (Maxwell Ramey) were very unusual for the mountain region. The sighting in *Avery*, at ~ 4400 feet above sea level, was most unusual for that high elevation. Other inland sightings included 16 in flight over Vandemark Farms *Nash* NC 2 Aug (John Lynch), one in Roaring River *Wilkes* NC 23-24 Aug (Dale Reynolds, m. obs.), up to two around Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 28 Aug through 10 Sep (Brian Barchus, m. obs.), and one in flight over Howerton Rd *Guilford* NC 20 Sep (Rhonda Weiss).

Roseate Spoonbill: Three at the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC 6 Aug (Jay Chandler) were a first for that county. 12 at Copas Lake *Brunswick* NC 20 Aug (Cheryl Manger, Joanne Parker) was a record high count for NC.

Swallow-tailed Kite: As usual, post-breeding dispersal resulted in multiple sightings in the western half of our region from mid-July to early September. Nine near Fountain Inn *Laurens* SC 16 Jul (Simon Harvey) was a notable count for that area. Six over Harmon Field *Polk* NC 13-15 Aug (Aaron Steed, m. obs.) and one over Mills River *Henderson* NC 19-22 Aug (Steve Barlow, m. obs.) were unusual for the mountain region.

Mississippi Kite: During post-breeding dispersal, mid-July through mid-September, sightings were made at sites as far west as *Swain* NC, where an immature bird was photographed at Kituwah Farm 12 Aug (Bob Butler).

Rough-legged Hawk: Individuals were seen at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 29 Oct into winter (Dwayne Ragin, m. obs.), at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 8 Nov and 29 Nov (John Fussell, et al.), and at Pond Mountain Game Land *Ashe* NC, a rarer dark- morph bird, 26 Nov through 23 Dec (Guy McGrane, m. obs.).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: One heard calling in southern *Moore* NC 4 Sep (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton) was unusual for the Sandhills region.

Ash-throated Flycatcher: A first-year bird was banded at the Little Bear banding site on the east end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 3 Nov (Josh Lefever, et al.). Two were seen at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 29 Nov (John Fussell, et al.).

Great Crested Flycatcher: One recorded calling at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 29 Nov (Michael Adams) was very late.

***Myiarchus* sp.**: An ambiguous-looking pale *Myiarchus* flycatcher with a relatively long/slender bill was photographed during rainy weather in Waves *Dare* NC 25 Sep (Karen Lebing). Most likely a water-logged Ash-throated Flycatcher, this bird was quite early for that regular late-fall/winter vagrant. There in only one previous fall record made prior to November—one at Pea Island NWR 24 Sep 1994.

Western Kingbird: About ten were reported this fall, all at sites along or near the coast, 23 Sep though the end of the period.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent adult Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 16 Sep (Elizabeth Anderegg, Charles Donnelly, Craig Watson). If accepted, the report would provide the third official record for SC.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Sightings were made at over a dozen sites this fall, all 16 Aug through 9 Oct. Individuals seen and photographed at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 18 Aug (Michael Adams, m. obs.) and at Ft Macon *Carteret* NC 23 Sep (Steve Howell) were notable for sites in the coastal plain.

Acadian Flycatcher: One seen and photographed along Howerton Rd in *Guilford* NC 3-4 Nov (Andrew Thornton) was quite late.

Least Flycatcher: One at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC, where photographed and recorded calling, 21-27 Nov (Jeff Lewis, m. obs.) was very late, possibly attempting to over-winter in that area. This species is the only *Empidonax* flycatcher that regularly lingers/over-winters in the southeastern United States, albeit mostly in Florida and Texas.

Say's Phoebe: One was seen and photographed in Waves *Dare* NC 5-6 Oct (Karen Lebing, m. obs.).

Red-eyed Vireo: A total of 350 migrants in flight over Run Hill State Natural Area *Dare* NC 23 Sep (Doug Gochfeld) was a truly amazing count. One photographed at a birdbath in *Lexington* SC 27-30 Nov (Irvin Pitts) was extremely late.

Red-eyed Vireo, 27 Nov 2020, Lexington Co, SC. Photo by Irvin Pitts.

Black-whiskered Vireo: Already accepted by the SC BRC is the report of one captured and banded on the east end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 25 Aug (Aaron Given, Josh Lefever, et al.). This report provided only the second official record for SC.

Common Raven: One seen in flight over I-95 in *Wilson* NC 1 Nov (Charles Caron) and, probably the same individual, over nearby Buckhorn Reservoir 2 Nov (John Lynch) were a first for that county.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Late to depart were three at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 21 Nov (Pam Ford, Craig Watson) and four at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 26 Nov (Jamie Adams).

Cave Swallow: Individuals at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 17 Oct (Jamie Adams), at Jockey's Ridge SP *Dare* NC 26 Oct (Brian Bockhahn), and at Mason Inlet 3 Nov (Sam Cooper) were good finds.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: It is an irruption year for this species. Sightings at sites outside the mountains began 30 Aug with one in Duck *Dare* NC (Jeff Lewis). By the beginning of October, sightings were made at sites throughout the Carolinas.

White-breasted Nuthatch: This species made a notable migratory push down the northern Outer Banks beginning in mid-October. Sightings were made at multiple sites where the species is typically absent, from Currituck Banks Reserve south to the Bodie Island Lighthouse. Four in Duck *Dare* NC 19 Oct (Mara Kaminowitz) was the highest count and possibly a new record high count for the county.

Winter Wren: One heard singing and then seen at Little Creek Waterfowl Impoundment *Durham* NC 8 Sep (Evans Lodge) was quite early for a site outside the mountains.

Sedge Wren: One at Lake Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC 20-29 Nov (Debra & Steve Patterson, m. obs.) was unusual for upstate SC.

Marsh Wren: One photographed in Brevard *Transylvania* NC 21 Nov (Nathaniel Axtell) was quite late for a site in the mountain region.

Townsend's Solitaire: Two reports were made this fall, both pending review by the respective state BRCs—one seen and photographed by many at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 11 Oct (Paul & Tristan Herwood, m. obs.) and one seen just downslope of Black Balsam Knob *Haywood* NC 22 Oct (Melinda Welton). North and South Carolina each have one previously accepted report.

Sage Thrasher: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Sage Thrasher at Lake Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC 19 Nov (Michael Robertson, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide SC with its first record of this vagrant from the west.

Evening Grosbeak: It is an irruption year for this species. Sightings began at the start of November with ten at a feeder in Gates NC 1 Nov (Signa Williams) and continued into winter at dozens of sites, mostly at feeders, in the northern half of NC.

Purple Finch: An irruption year for this finch as well, Purple Finches started showing up in the Carolinas in mid-September and were being seen throughout the region by the end of the period. 156 in flight over a hawk-watch at Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC 31 Oct (Dwayne Martin) was a notable count.

Common Redpoll: One photographed along the Blue Ridge Parkway in *Avery* NC 20 Nov (Cody Porter) was a good find for the mountains and a possible indicator of an impending winter irruption.

White-winged Crossbill: One seen and photographed at a feeder in northern *Wake* NC 28-29 Nov (Patty Tice, m. obs.) was quite the surprise.

White-winged Crossbill, 28 Nov 2020, Wake Co, NC. Photos by Patty Tice.

Pine Siskin: This irruptive finch was well-reported this fall starting around mid-October, with sightings made throughout the region by the end of the period. 500 at Mount Mitchell SP *Yancey* NC 24 Oct (Gary Harbour) was a notable count.

Snow Bunting: One photographed at the summit of Table Rock Mountain *Burke* NC 7 Nov (Jack Bennes, Mark Stanek) was a great find for the mountain region and a first for that county. Along the coast, individuals were seen at Ft Sumter *Charleston* SC 5-13 Nov (Pam Ford, Craig Watson, m. obs.) and around the jetty on the south side of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 15-17 Nov (Sarah Toner, m. obs.).

Lark Sparrow: Sightings were made at ten sites this fall. Two were seen around the north end of North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 27-30 Aug (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.). Individuals photographed in Maiden *Lincoln* NC 13 Aug (Paige Martin) and at Modern Turf in Rembert *Sumter* SC 13 Sep (Shawn Smolen-Morton, Mac Williams) were first for those counties. One returned to feeders along Alder Branch Rd in *Camden* NC for a fourth winter in a row 10 Nov (James Harrison).

Clay-colored Sparrow: Sightings were made at over a dozen sites, mostly near the coast, beginning in mid-September. Outside of the coastal plain, individuals were photographed in Maiden *Lincoln* NC 26 Sep (Paige Martin), at Clarks Creek Nature Preserve *Mecklenburg* NC 11-12 Oct (Jeff Turner, m. obs.), at Mills River Park *Henderson* NC 11-12 Oct (Steve Barlow, Bob Butler, m. obs.), and at Jamison Park *Forsyth* NC 5 Nov (David & Susan Disher, John Haire).

LeConte's Sparrow: Individuals seen at the Coastal Studies Institute on Roanoke Island *Dare* NC 9 Oct (Jeff Lewis) and along the Basin Trail at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 16 Nov (Simon Thompson, et al.) were good finds. One seen and photographed at Valle Crucis Community Park *Watauga* NC 7 Nov (Thomas McNeil, m. obs.) was a great find for the mountain region and a first for that county. One hung around the former golf course at Rea Farms in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 19 Oct (Greg Hays, Patty Masten) into winter (m. obs.).

Nelson's Sparrow: Three at the former golf course at Rea Farms in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 10 Oct (Jeff Turner, m. obs.) was an excellent count for a site away from the coast.

Grasshopper Sparrow: One photographed along the Chinqua Penn Walking Trail *Rockingham* NC 27 Nov (Marty Wall) was late for a site in the Piedmont.

Henslow's Sparrow: One seen and photographed at the former golf course at Rea Farms in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 12 Oct (Greg Hays, Dennis Kent) was a fantastic find for the Piedmont region in fall.

Lincoln's Sparrow: One seen and photographed in the Dan River Game Land *Rockingham* NC 20-23 Sep (Marty Wall, m. obs.) was early for a site in the Piedmont. September sightings of this species are traditionally confined to the mountain region.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: An adult was seen among a mixed blackbird flock near Aurora *Beaufort* NC 15 Oct and 5 Nov (Richard Barmore, Elizabeth White).

Bobolink: One photographed at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 4 Nov (Mark Rhodes) was the latest reported this fall.

Western Meadowlark: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of a Western Meadowlark recorded singing at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 12-27 Nov (Steve Patterson, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the second record for SC.

Bullock's Oriole: A first-year male visiting feeders near Bluffton *Beaufort* SC Nov (Mindy Cawley) and 18 Nov (Steven Guy) was somewhat early for this rare winter vagrant to the Carolinas.

Baltimore Oriole: 1580 migrants over Run Hill State Natural Area *Dare* NC on the morning of 23 Sep (Doug Gochfeld) was an amazing count.

***Icterus* sp.**: A female oriole with a relatively long, down-curved bill photographed at Oleander Memorial Gardens *New Hanover* NC 21 Nov (Jamie Adams) was either an Orchard Oriole or a Hooded Oriole. If this bird was an Orchard Oriole, then it was extremely late, as most depart the region by September.

Shiny Cowbird: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Shiny Cowbird in a yard on Daniel Island *Berkeley* SC 15 Nov (Tate Curry).

Brewer's Blackbird: Sightings were made at four sites in November, with three near Brevard *Transylvania* NC 1 Nov (Michael Plauché) being the earliest.

Golden-winged Warbler: One captured at the banding station on the east end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 3 Oct (Josh Lefever, et al.) and one photographed near Hampstead *Pender* NC 5 Oct (Sara Meissner) were notable for sites along the coast.

Tennessee Warbler: One photographed at Williamson Preserve *Wake* NC 25 Nov (Carol Stroupe) was quite late.

Nashville Warbler: Five at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 14 Oct (Aaron Steed) was a remarkable count for our region.

Connecticut Warbler: Almost a dozen were reported this fall, 5 Sep through 16 Oct. Amazingly, a total of three individuals were banded on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC over the course of two mornings 4-5 Oct (Daniel Errichetti, Josh Lefever, et al.). Interestingly, the individual captured 4 Oct was the first for that banding site in 12 years of operation.

Mourning Warbler: Individuals were seen at a total of seven sites in the southern NC mountains 4 Sep to 25 Sep. One at Mills River Park *Henderson* NC 12 Oct (Kevin Burke, m. obs.) was somewhat late for the mountain region. A first-year male was banded on the west end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 23 Sep (Daniel Errichetti, et al.) was notable for SC.

Hooded Warbler: An adult female in northern *Watauga* NC 6 Nov (Merrill Lynch) was quite late.

Kirtland's Warbler: Already accepted by the NC BRC were two reports from the NC Piedmont—one seen and photographed by many just below the dam on Jordan Lake *Chatham* 27-30 Sep (Mark Montazer, m. obs.) and one photographed at Haw River SP *Rockingham* 4 Oct (Paul Sumner).

Blackburnian Warbler: One photographed at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 16 Aug (Mandy Johnson, et al.) was rather early for a site along the coast.

Yellow Warbler: One photographed at Oak Hollow Lake *Guilford* NC 7 Nov (Andrew Thornton) was quite late, especially for a site in the Piedmont.

Blackpoll Warbler: Individuals photographed along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 21 Nov (Andrew Thornton, Matt Wangerin) and along the causeway at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 25 Nov (Sarah Toner, et al.) were late to depart.

Black-throated Gray Warbler: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Black-throated Gray Warbler at Cowan's Ford WildlifeRefuge *Mecklenburg* NC 6-7 Sep (Eric Keith, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the fifth official record for NC and the first with definitive photographs. This report is also the earliest in the fall/winter season ever made in NC, with all previous reports October through February.

Townsend's Warbler: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Townsend's Warbler in a yard in Hatteras *Dare* NC 23-24 Sep (Haley Rosell). If accepted, the report would provide the fifth official record for NC.

Painted Redstart: Perhaps the most unexpected find this fall was that of an adult Painted Redstart on the south dike of North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC where seen and photographed by many 5-6 Oct (Leo & Melissa Bachand, m. obs.). Already accepted by the NC BRC, the report provides the first record of the species anywhere in the Carolinas.

Summer Tanager: A female lingering in a yard with a suet feeder in southwestern *Greenville* SC until 12 Nov (Christina Burgess-Griswold) was rather late for upstate SC.

Scarlet Tanager: One photographed at Stanback Forest and Nature Preserve in Spencer *Rowan* NC 27 Nov (Steve Coggin) was very late. Of the three tanager species found in the Carolinas, this species is the least likely to be seen in late November.

Western Tanager: A female visited a feeder in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 22 Nov into winter (Deb Winter).

Indigo Bunting: One seen along Gay Rd in *Edgecombe* NC 22 Nov (Ricky Davis) was rather late, especially for a site away from the coast.

Painted Bunting: Two, a male and a female, photographed at a feeder in Hamlet *Richmond* NC 13 Aug (Doug Warnock) were firsts for that county.

Corrigenda:

Bobolink: Along with the sites listed in the Summer 2020 "Briefs for the Files," Bobolinks also likely nested at a traditional nesting site in northern *Alleghany* NC in late May (*fide* Guy McGrane).

Black-throated Green Warbler: The Summer 2020 "Briefs for the Files" contained a misleading statement regarding the breeding range of Black-throated Green Warblers in the Piedmont region. The species has been known to nest at South Mountains SP *Burke* NC for many years, though numbers recently have decreased due to the hemlock die-off associated with the Wooly Adelgid (*fide* Dwayne Martin). So, while breeding at most sites in the Piedmont is unusual, it is not unusual at that particular site and a few others inthe foothills.

CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

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- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
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The Chat

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General Field Notes

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Cover: Chestnut-sided Warbler at Mt. Mitchell, NC by John Cox

First Record of Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) in North Carolina

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On 9 April 2020, Jelmer Poelstra located a Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) in alternate plumage while scoping the breakwater at Crosswinds Marina on Jordan Lake in Chatham County, NC. The bird was with multiple Double-crested Cormorants (*P. auritus*), which highlighted the size difference between the two species, as well as Neotropic Cormorant's longer tail, smaller bill, and shape and coloration of the feathering at the base of the bill. The bird displayed a white, V-shaped, feathery plume on each side of the head. The cormorant was observed perched, swimming, diving, and, briefly, in flight.

News of the birds' presence quickly spread throughout the birding community, and perhaps due to location near the major metropolitan area of Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, scores of observers were able to view the cormorant on 9 and 10 April (Southern). This represents a first record of the species in the Carolinas, and with acceptance of photos by the NC Bird Records Committee, Neotropical Cormorant is added to the state's Definitive List of accepted species.

Neotropic Cormorant is a wide-ranging species breeding along lakes, rivers, and coastlines from the southern tip of South America through the southern United States (Texas BBA). Birds wandering from established nesting areas have been identified as far north as Whitefish Point, MI (eBird).

Along the mid-Atlantic region from New York south, multiple reports of Neotropic Cormorant exist for New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and Florida. Delaware, Georgia, and now North Carolina, have one report each. Other eastern states also show a pattern of reports, with two from Alabama and multiple records each from Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio. Pennsylvania and West Virginia join South Carolina as states without reports. (eBird)

The reason behind the lack of records in the Carolinas prior to the Jordan Lake bird is unknown. Perhaps some Neotropic Cormorants are overlooked due to similarity with Double-crested Cormorant, but the presence of records in states surrounding the Carolinas suggests the species was "overdue" in both Carolinas. And in fact Nate Swick presented a keynote speech at a Carolina Bird Club seasonal meeting in Nags Head in 2019 on "*The Next 10: Predicting First Records in NC & SC*", with Neotropic Cormorant at the top of the list (pers comm.)

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Neotropic Cormorant (center, right) with Double-crested Cormorants 9 Apr 2020, Chatham Co. NC. Photo by David Fischer.

Neotropic Cormorant (center) showing white post-ocular patch and V-shaped gape, 9 Apr 2020, Chatham Co. NC. Photo by Stacy Barbour.

A Description of Black-throated Green Warbler (Wayne's) (*Setophaga virens waynei*) Nests in Coastal North Carolina

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Abstract

The Black-throated Green Warbler (Wayne's) (*Setophaga virens waynei*), a declining subspecies, breeds along the Coastal Plain of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Since being described in 1918, little basic breeding ecology has been documented for this subspecies. Here we describe four nests that we monitored in southeastern North Carolina during the 2020 breeding season. Of the four nests, one was found in a Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*), one in a Pond Pine (*Pinus serotine*), one in a Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), and one in a large Loblolly Bay (*Gordonia lasianthus*). One nest was successful, two failed, and the last had an unknown fate. More research is needed to further understand the breeding ecology of this declining subspecies.

Introduction

Understanding a declining species' basic breeding ecology is vital to properly protect and manage for it. The Black-throated Green Warbler (Wayne's) (hereafter, Wayne's Warbler), is a declining Nearctic-Neotropical migratory songbird and a subspecies of the Black-throated Green Warbler (*S. virens*). Its disjunct breeding range occurs along a narrow band of the Atlantic Coastal Plain from southern Virginia to central South Carolina, and is about 400 km east and 1200 m lower in elevation than the nominate race in the Appalachian Mountains (Sprunt 1953,Watts et al 2011; Fig. 1). The Wayne's Warbler arrives and breeds much earlier than the nominate race and is associated with non-alluvial forested wetlands consisting of Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), Atlantic White Cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*), pines (*Pinus* spp.) and mixed hardwoods such as Loblolly Bay (*Gordonia lasianthus*), Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), and Tupelo species (*Nyssa* spp.; Sprunt 1953, Cely 2005, Watts et al 2011). These habitats, which were once dominant across the Coastal Plain, have been largely converted into pine plantations, agriculture, and urban areas with only a fraction remaining (Noss et al 2015).

The Wayne's Warbler was first documented by Arthur Wayne in 1909. Outram Bangs described and named it after its discoverer in 1918 (Bangs 1918). Wayne first described the subspecies' nests in 1918 near Mount Pleasant, SC (Wayne 1919). Since 1918, only a handful of nest descriptions have been published (Pitelka 1938) and very little basic breeding research has been conducted. Here we describe four Wayne's Warbler nests located in Bladen Lakes State Forest, NC, and compare these nests to the nominate race.

Observation

During the 2020 breeding season, March-June, we searched for breeding male Wayne's Warblers for a separate genomics project. Singing males were first detected on 18 March 2020 near Tatum Millpond in Bladen Lakes State Forest (34.726531, -78.543057) in southeast North Carolina. We opportunistically searched for nests using behavioral cues (i.e., male singing, female collecting nesting material, adults carrying food). We located 14 males with territories and were able to find and monitor four active nests from different breeding pairs and recover one nest after the breeding season. Nests A and B were found on 28 April 2020 (Fig. 2) and nests C and D were found on 29 April 2020. All nests contained nestlings. All four nests were placed in different tree species, nest A in a Loblolly Bay, nest B in a Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*), nest C in a Red Maple and nest D in a Pond Pine (*Pinus serotina*; Fig 2). Basic location measurements for nests are listed in Table 1.

Figure 1. Breeding distribution of the Black-throated Green Warbler (Wayne's) (*Setophaga virens waynei*) and portions of the nominate Black-throated Green Warbler's (*S. v. virens*) range. Map created from IUCN data. The * indicates the Bladen Lakes State Forest study site.

Comparing the Bladen Lakes State Forest nests with published data, these nest sites were located in similarly described swampy drainages as Wayne's 1918 nests. Wayne's nests were found in a large magnolia (*Magnolia* spp.) and a large Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*). Those findings along with findings reported here indicate the birds' flexibility for using different tree species for nesting. Additionally, all four of our located nests were placed at or near (within 10 m) canopy gaps. The breeding pairs for which we were unable to locate nests also had multiple canopy gaps present in their territories. Although Wayne did not describe canopy gaps in his description of the nest, Smith and Matthew (1996) noted that *S. v. virens* used canopy gaps more than one would expect by chance.

Figure 2. Black-throated Green Warbler (Wayne's) (*Setophaga virens waynei*) nests during the 2020 breeding season in coastal North Carolina. Nests were found respectively in a (A) Loblolly Bay (*Gordonia lasianthus*), (B) Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*), (C) Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) and (D) Pond Pine (*Pinus serotina*).

We recovered a single nest after the breeding season, which was lined with moss and fine fern threads. The outside was covered with strips of Atlantic White Cedar bark and needles and was held together by silk. The inside diameter is 4.8 cm, outside diameter 7.8 cm, height 5.2 cm, and inside depth 4.8 cm. The weight was 10.13 g. Our nest measurements are similar to those published for *S. v. virens* nests. Pitelka (1938) described two Douglas Lake, MI, Black-throated Green Warbler nests with the inside diameters of 4.5 and 5 cm, outside diameters of 7.8 and 7.5 cm, inside depths of both 3.0 cm, minimum heights of both 3.0 cm, maximum heights of 5.5 and 6.5 cm, and weights

4.92 and 7.85 g.

We encourage further research on Wayne's Warbler across their breeding range to better inform a meaningful management plan for this declining subspecies.

Table 1. Nest data for four Black-throated Green Warbler (Wayne's) nests found in Bladen Lakes State Forest, North Carolina. Refer to Fig. 2 for nest phots.

Nest	Tree Species	Nest Success	Nest Height	Tree Height	Tree Diameter at Breast Height	Elevation Above Sea Level
A	Loblolly Bay	Failed	16.5 m	30.5 m	78.74 cm	31.5 m
B	Loblolly Pine	Successful	15.0 m	23.0 m	33.53 cm	32.4 m
C	Red Maple	Failed	16.0 m	19.0 m	34.80 cm	41.8 m
D	Pond Pine	Undetermined	7.9 m	18.0 m	33.78 cm	28.8 m

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B. Everett Jordan Lake Bird Counts – Part Three

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Part One in this series of articles covered background information on the Jordan Lake bird counts and discussed the long-term data for several species of birds that are closely tied to the lake itself. Part Two looked at the long-term data for one family of birds, the woodpeckers. Part Three discusses species in decline.

Several species that we have been monitoring for the past 43 years have shown signs of declining populations. In general, this has not been a local phenomenon; these species are declining throughout their ranges. Our data show that we are part of a larger problem.

Birds of Grasslands, Old Fields, and Early Successional Forests

Several bird species require open or partially open habitats. Eastern Meadowlarks, for example, are a grassland species. If these grasslands are left undisturbed by humans, they change. A succession of annual and perennial plants moves in. A similar change occurs when cultivated fields are abandoned or grazing animals no longer occupy pastures. Trees and shrubs also take root, and over time, they come to dominate the landscape. These early successional forests tend to have open areas between the trees and shrubs and open canopies. Northern Bobwhites, Field Sparrows, and Prairie Warblers specialize in these habitats. Eventually, the trees mature and shade out the other plants, and a closed canopy forest ensues.

This succession from open land through second growth to closed canopy forest is common in the Piedmont region of North Carolina. Fire, hurricanes, or human activities (for example, clear-cutting) may return the forest habitat to one or another of these early stages of succession; thus, the cyclical process continues. The birds that inhabit the open areas move about to take advantage of these changes. If something disrupts the cycling, the populations of these open land specialists decline. Our Jordan Lake bird count data reveal just such declines.

Eastern Meadowlarks (*Sturnella magna*), related to North American blackbirds and orioles, are birds of open grasslands. As Figures 2 and 3 show, this species is in decline in our count circle, both in the Spring Bird Count (SBC) data and the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data. Meadowlark populations are declining throughout their range in eastern North America (Jaster et al. 2020), and the decline in our area epitomizes their general decline. Meadowlarks build their nests on the ground in open grasslands, pastures, and hay fields. If these areas are mowed early in the breeding season, the nests are destroyed. And as cities and towns expand into these areas, the meadowlarks lose more and more of their required habitat.

Figure 1. Eastern Meadowlark (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

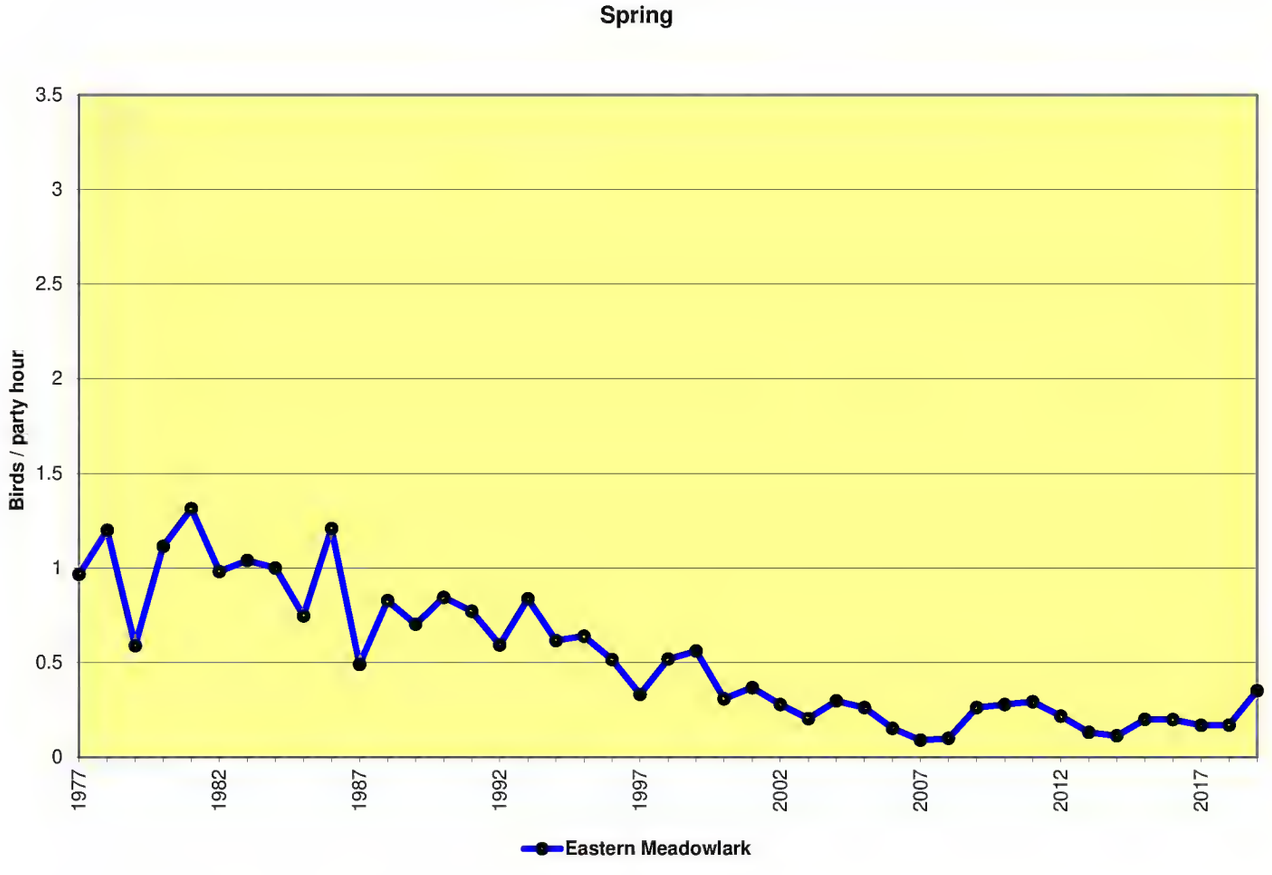

Figure 2. SBC, Eastern Meadowlark

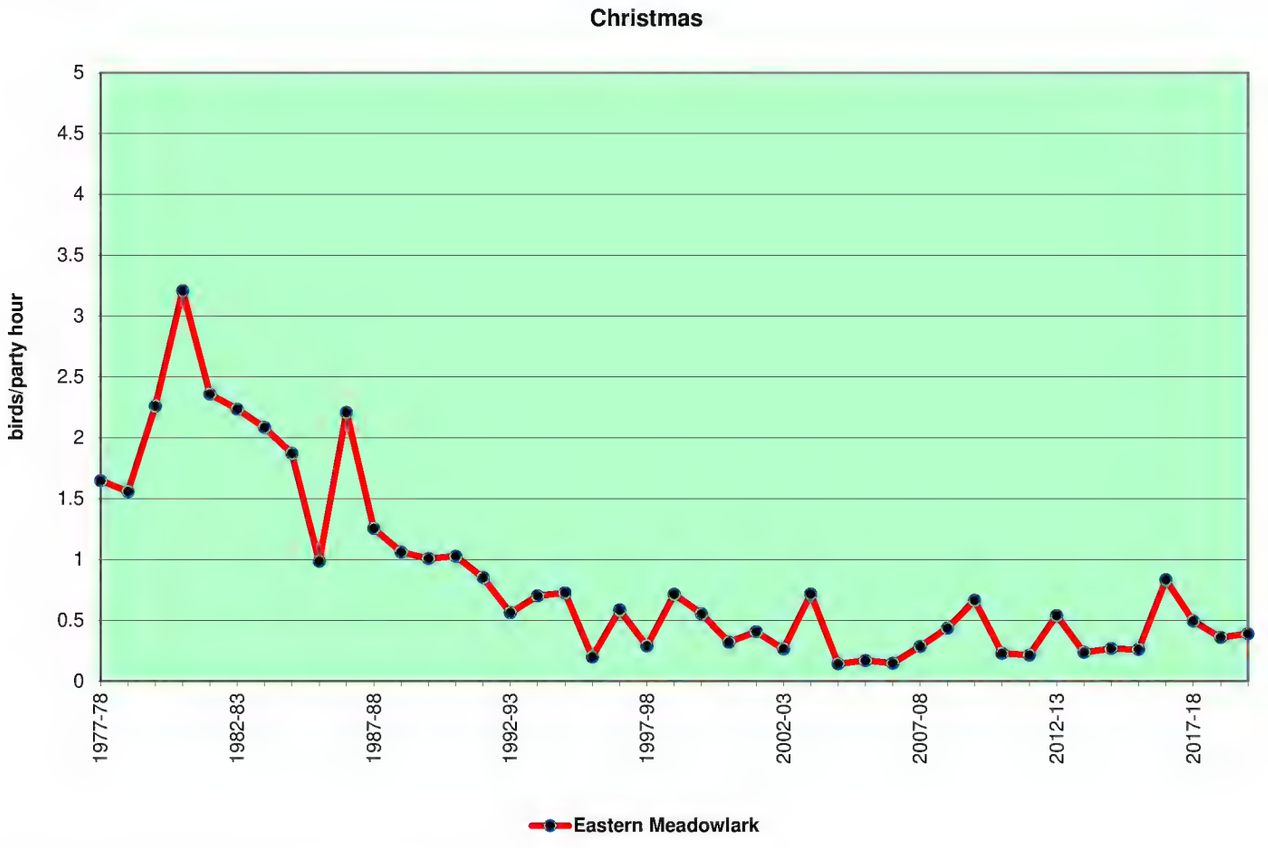

Figure 3. CBC, Eastern Meadowlark

In the 1960s and 70s, it seemed as if **Northern Bobwhites** (*Colinus virginianus*) could be seen every time someone went into the appropriate habitat here in the Piedmont of central North Carolina. These birds of open lands, agricultural fields, and early successional, open woodlands were abundant. Their onomatopoeic call was a regular accompaniment to any morning bird walk. But as the graphs in Figures 5 and 6 show, in the early 1980s, the Bobwhite population began a precipitous decline. By the early 2000s, our counters considered themselves very lucky to find even one of these beautiful quail.

This population decline was not limited to our region; it occurred throughout the Bobwhite's range all over North America (Brennan et al. 2020). Various explanations have been proposed:

- Changes in agricultural practices including cleaner, more thorough harvesting and plowing fields right up to forest edges with no buffer zones
- Extensive use of pesticides and herbicides
- Increased suburbanization by humans of Bobwhite habitat
- The presence of fire ants, acting as predators to these ground-nesting birds
- Disease, perhaps spread by the release of captive-reared birds for hunting

Whatever the causes, the population decline of these quail in our count circle mirrors the continental decline.

Figure 4. Northern Bobwhite (photograph, Irvin Pitts)

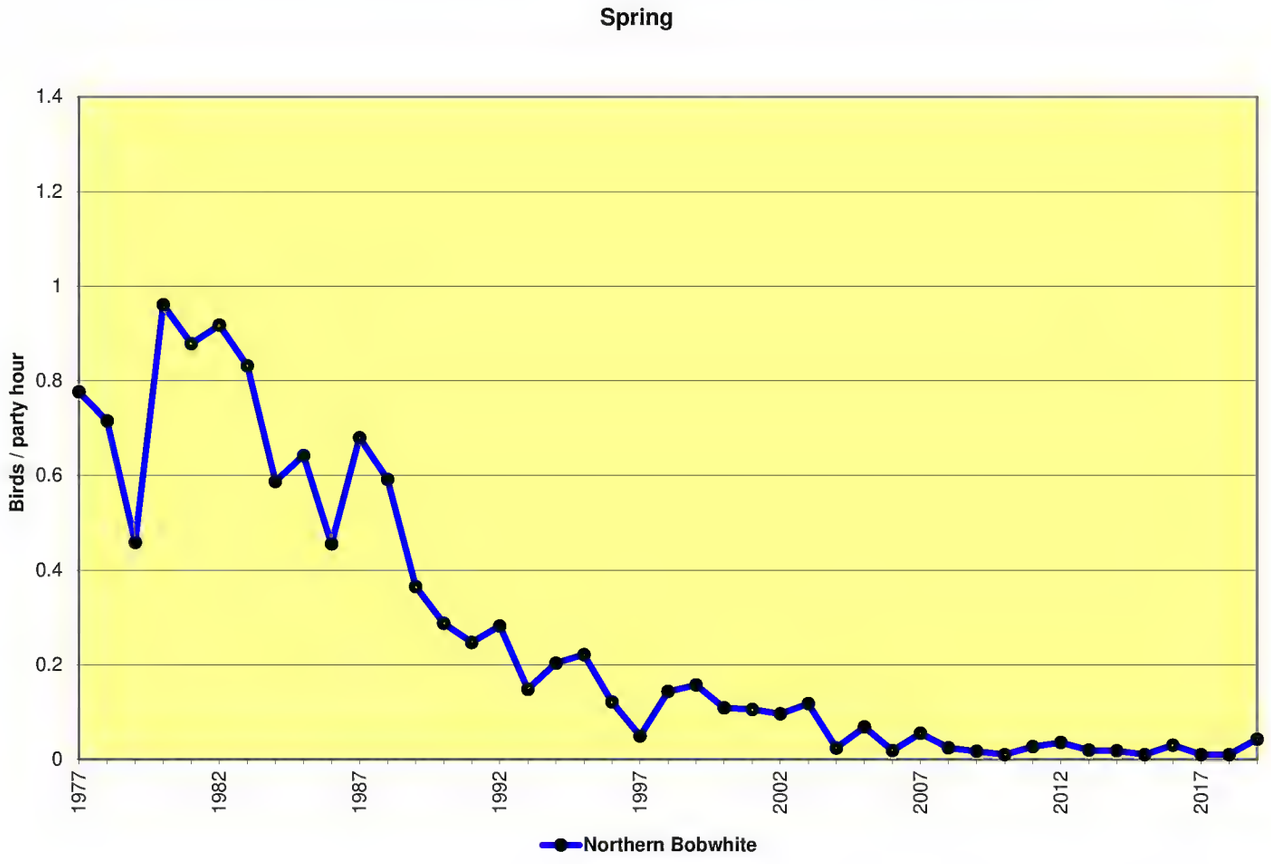

Figure 5. SBC, Northern Bobwhite

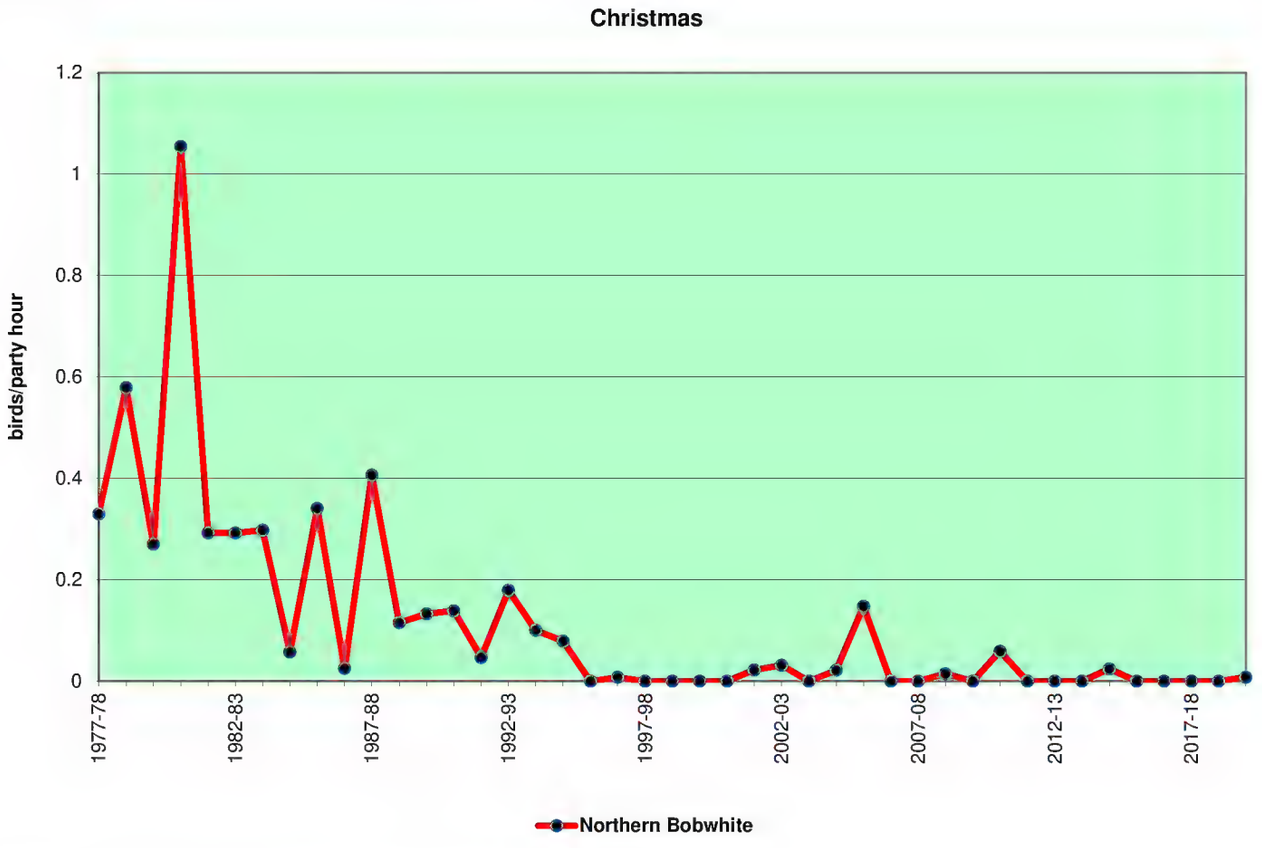

Figure 6. CBC, Northern Bobwhite

Field Sparrows (*Spizella pusilla*) are birds of early successional second growth forests and shrubby fields. As young forests and fields mature into more dense woodlands, they are no longer suitable habitat for these sparrows. As mentioned above, this succession is a normal occurrence in nature. But if these areas are cleared for agriculture or human habitations, they are also lost to this species. As Figures 8 and 9 show, Field Sparrows, like the preceding two species, are also in decline in our count circle. The fact that they used to be more common in the non-breeding season was due to an influx of migrants from the northern part of their range. Since these sparrows are declining throughout their range, this winter influx no longer occurs to the degree it once did (Carey et al. 2020).

Figure 7. Field Sparrow (photograph, Joe Donahue)

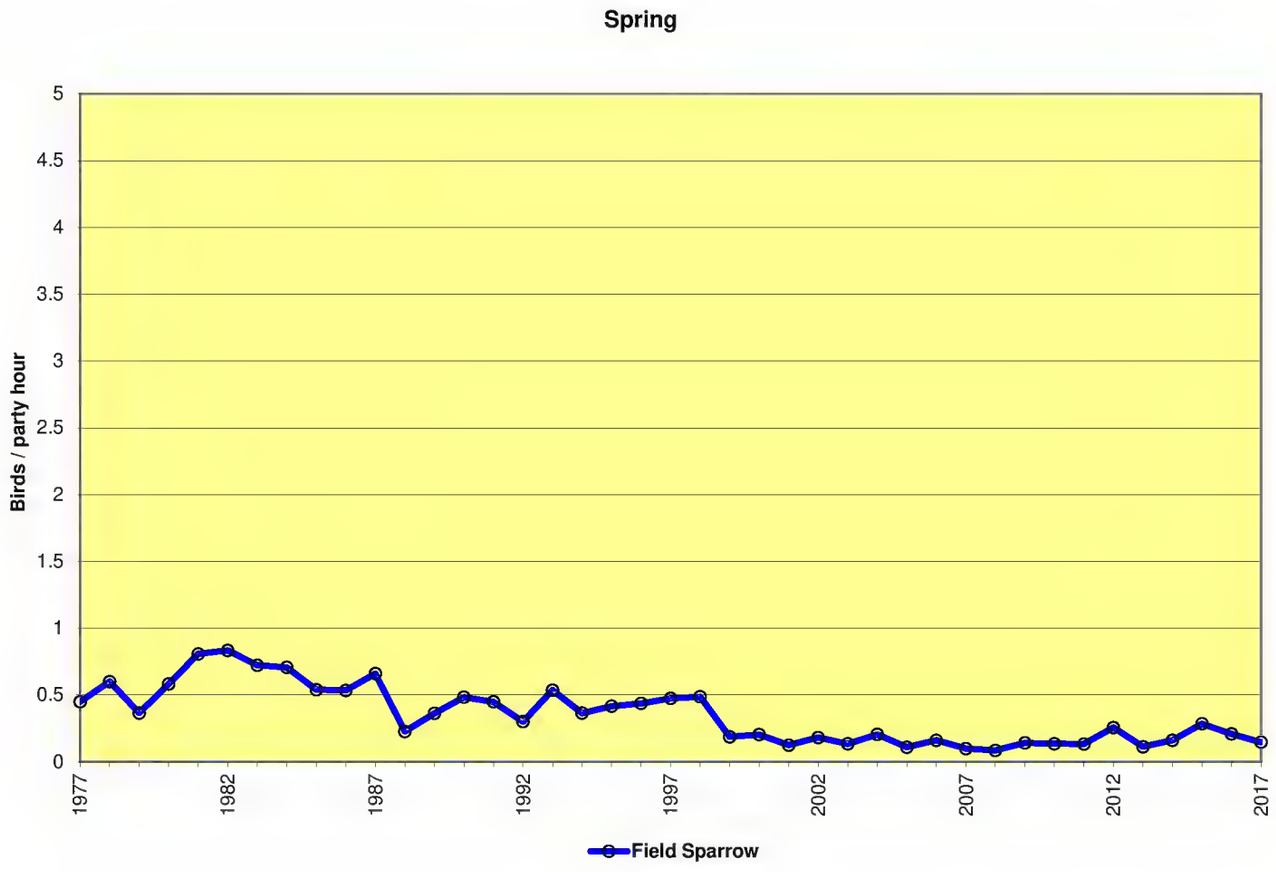

Figure 8. SBC, Field Sparrow

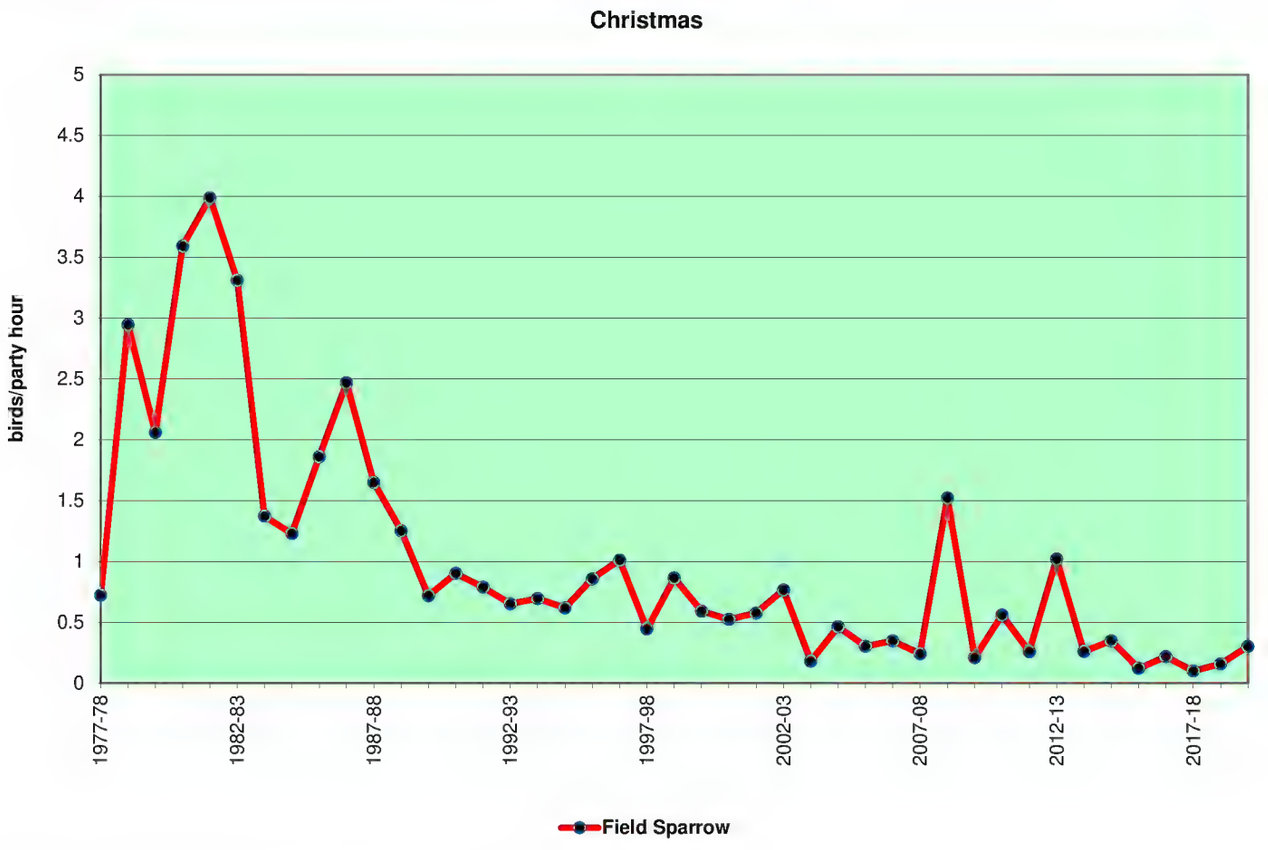

Figure 9. CBC, Field Sparrow

The beautiful **Prairie Warbler** (*Dendroica discolor*) is another species that lives in shrubby fields and early successional woodlands. It breeds throughout eastern North America but migrates to southern Florida and islands in the Caribbean for our winter months. Again, as with Field Sparrows, when early successional habitat matures into forest, is converted to agricultural land, or is cleared for human housing, it is lost to this species for breeding. In addition, Prairie Warblers may also be under stress in their winter range (Nolan Jr. et al. 2020).

Figure 10. Prairie Warbler (photograph, Joe Donahue)

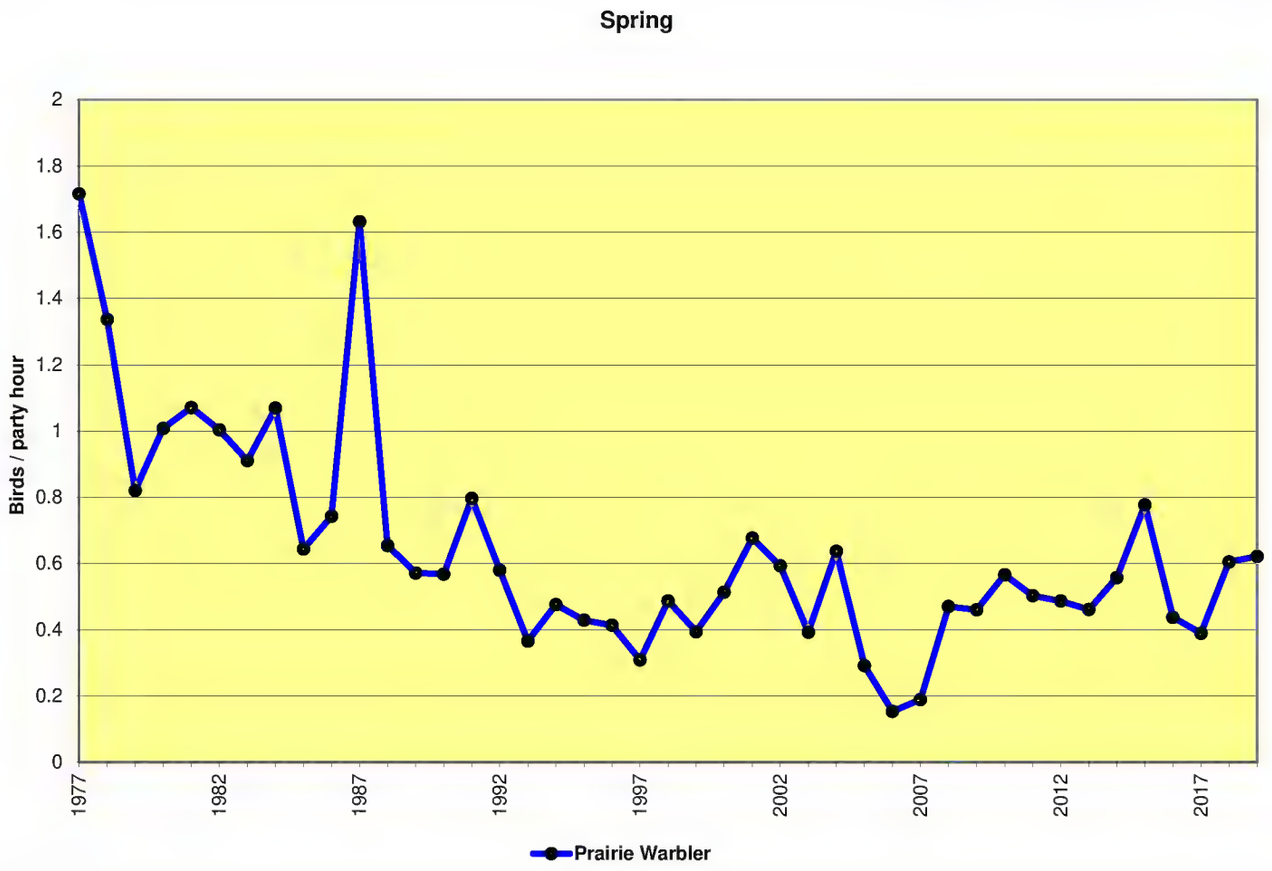

Figure 11. SBC, Prairie Warbler

The **Yellow-breasted Chat** (*Icteria virens*) used to be classified together with the North American wood warblers like the Prairie Warbler. However, many aspects of its physiology, anatomy, and behavior led ornithologists to consider the idea that it was not a warbler. And now that we have genetic evidence from genomic studies, it is clear that this is a bird unto itself. It has recently been reclassified into its own family, a family of one species world-wide. Chats are migratory, breeding in our area and wintering in Central America. In our part of North America, Chats prefer similar habitats to those of the preceding two species. And they are similarly showing a decline in numbers in our counts. In other parts of their range, they can take advantage of more arid conditions or even mangroves and second growth tropical forests in their wintering grounds. Apparently, the local decline that we have seen is not the case in other parts of its range (Billerman 2020).

Figure 12. Yellow-breasted Chat (photograph, Joe Donahue)

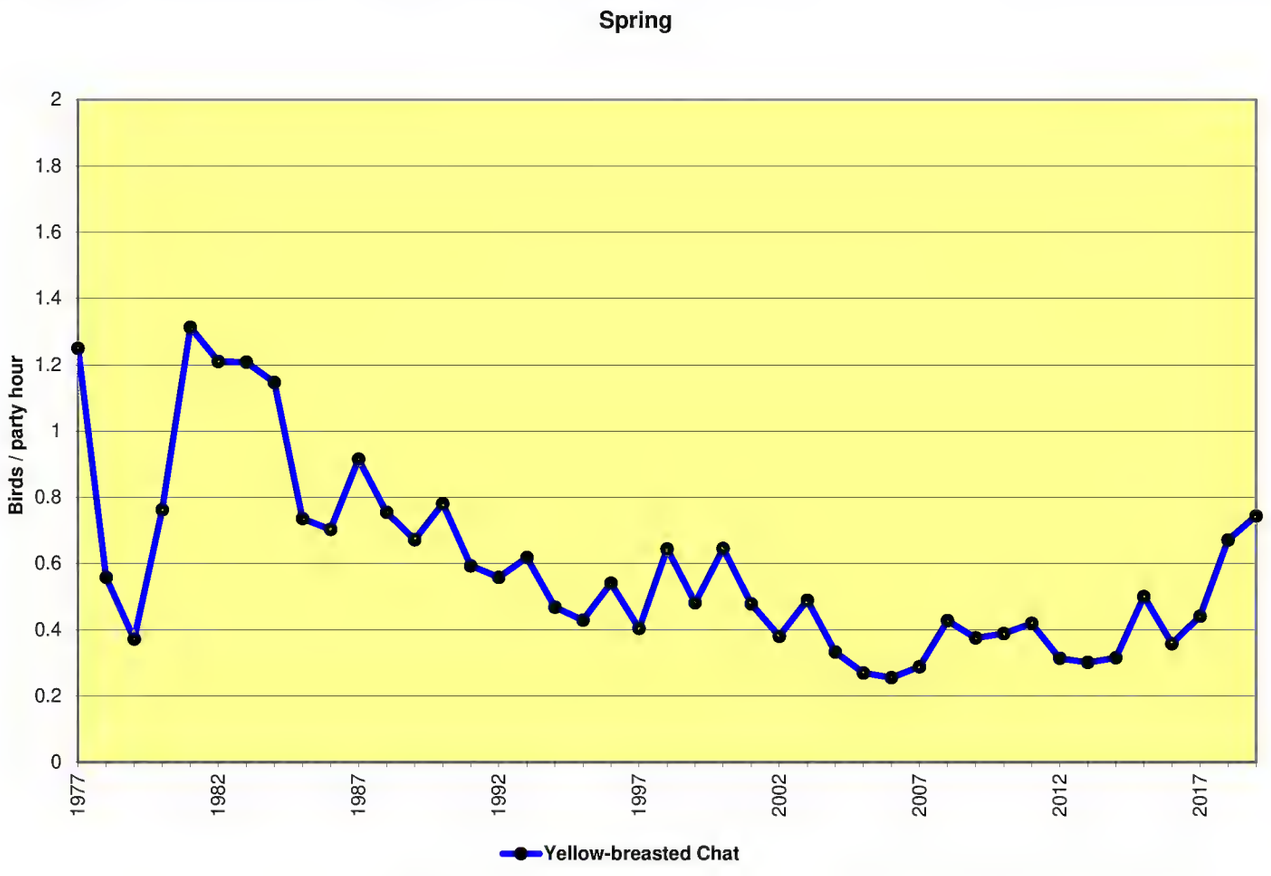

Figure 13. SBC, Yellow-breasted Chat

Forest Birds

In the succession of plants described above, the early successional stages ultimately give way to closed canopy forests. A typical scenario in our area is that loblolly pines or eastern red cedars are the pioneering trees in this process. Pine seedlings germinate and grow very quickly in full sun in abandoned croplands and rapidly dominate the landscape. Cedars are a bit slower, but often come to dominate land that was used for grazing. Why the difference? Grazing animals like cattle will eat pine seedlings but seem to avoid baby cedars. No grazers, pines get the upper hand; grazers, cedars win out.

In either of these situations, shade tolerant, slower growing deciduous trees (oaks, maples, hickories, etc.) can germinate and grow up under pines and cedars. Eventually, the deciduous trees replace the conifers and the 'climax' forest is dominated by these broadleaf trees.

The **Red-eyed Vireo** (*Vireo olivaceus*) is a relatively nondescript, insectivorous species of the deciduous forest canopy, and perhaps the most abundant bird in that habitat in eastern North America. During the breeding season, males sing almost incessantly from dawn into the afternoon. Walk along a forest trail in May, and you will almost certainly hear the rather monotonous 2- or 3-note phrases of this species. Though the songs seem monotonous to the human ear, any given male Red-eyed Vireo may have as many as 50 different phrases in his repertoire (Cimprich et al. 2020).

Though these vireos are abundant in our local forests, there does appear to be cause for some concern in parts of their range (Cimprich et al. 2020). North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data show an overall positive trend in vireo numbers (an increase of 0.75% per year over the past 50 years). However, at the southern limits of their range

(Texas and Florida), vireos are decreasing in abundance. It looks like our data from central North Carolina (Fig. 15) suggest a trend that is similar to what is being seen further south. This is definitely a trend worth watching.

Figure 14. Red-eyed Vireo (photograph, Tom Driscoll)

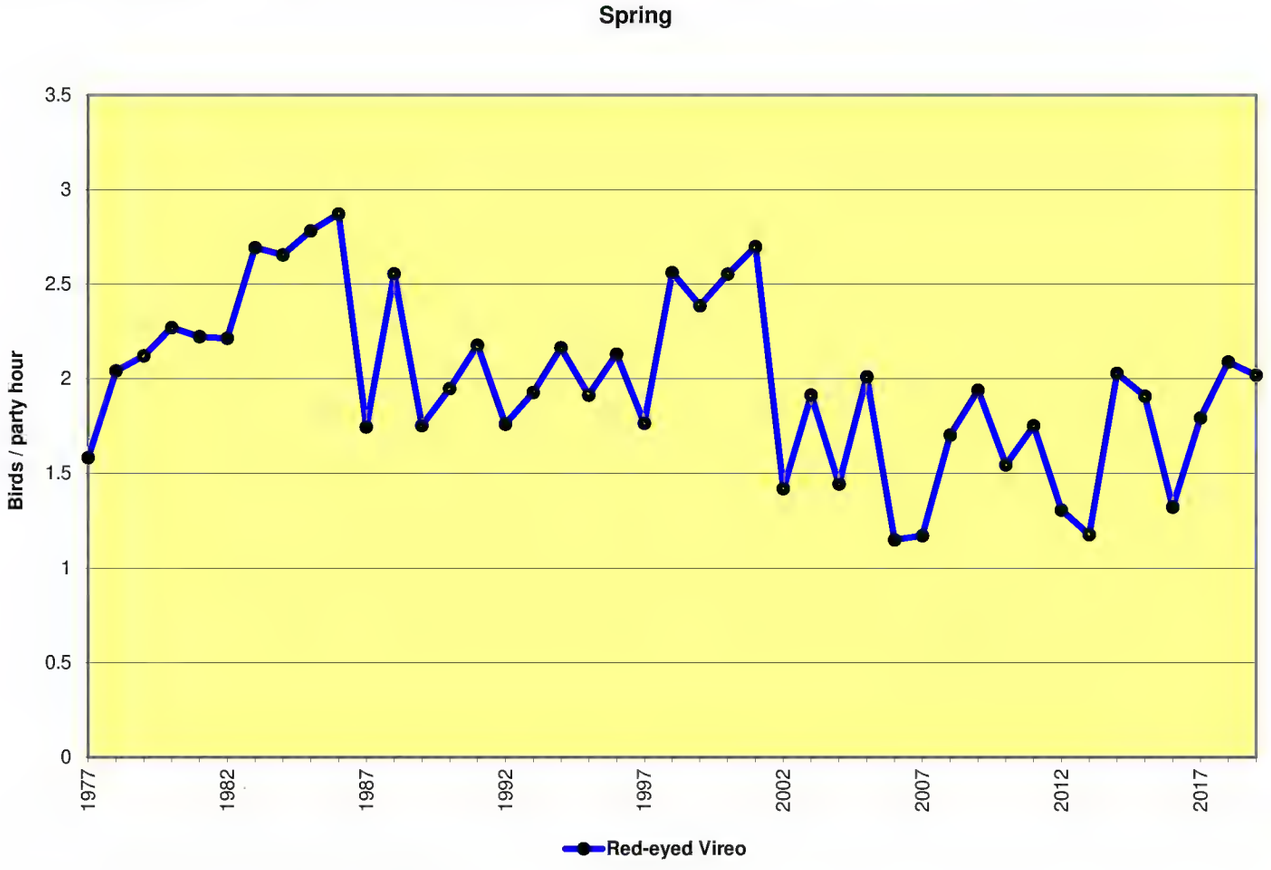

Figure 15. SBC, Red-eyed Vireo

The male **Wood Thrush** (*Hylocichla mustelina*) is a remarkable singer. He has a syrinx at the base of his trachea, positioned just above where the windpipe splits into two branches, the bronchi. By regulating the airflow in each bronchus independently (both inhaling and exhaling, as a human harmonica player does), he can produce two sounds at the same time—in essence, singing a duet with himself. His rich, flute-like song is one of the most beautiful sounds emanating from the eastern deciduous forest during the breeding season.

Unfortunately, the Wood Thrush's role in the dawn chorus has become less and less common since the 1970s (Evans et al. 2020). This population decrease is widespread, both in the thrush's breeding range in eastern North America and in its winter range in Central America. The decrease we see in our data (Fig. 17) reflects the larger picture. Thrush populations typically decline when forest patches become fragmented, even if the total forest area remains the same. Birds around the periphery of a given patch suffer the most predation, while birds living in the interior part of a given patch are the safest. Smaller forest fragments have more edge and thus invite more predation of birds like thrushes. Populations are further threatened by Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*), who find it easier to parasitize thrush nests in these smaller forest fragments as well.

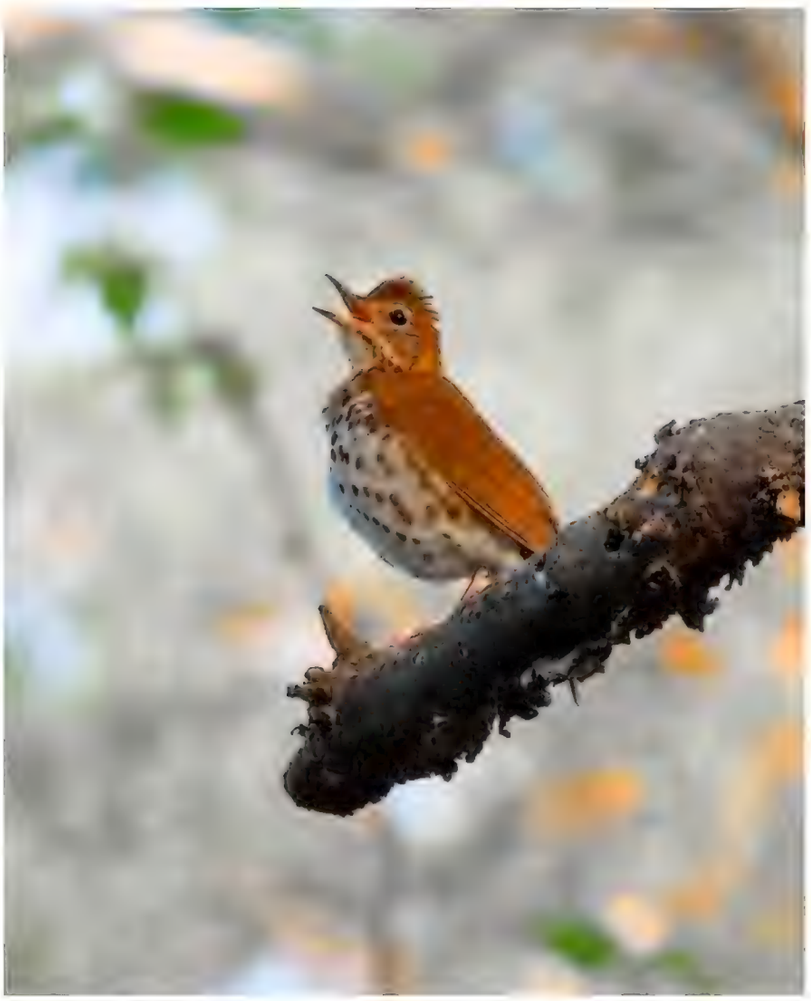

Figure 16. Wood Thrush (photograph, Joe Donahue)

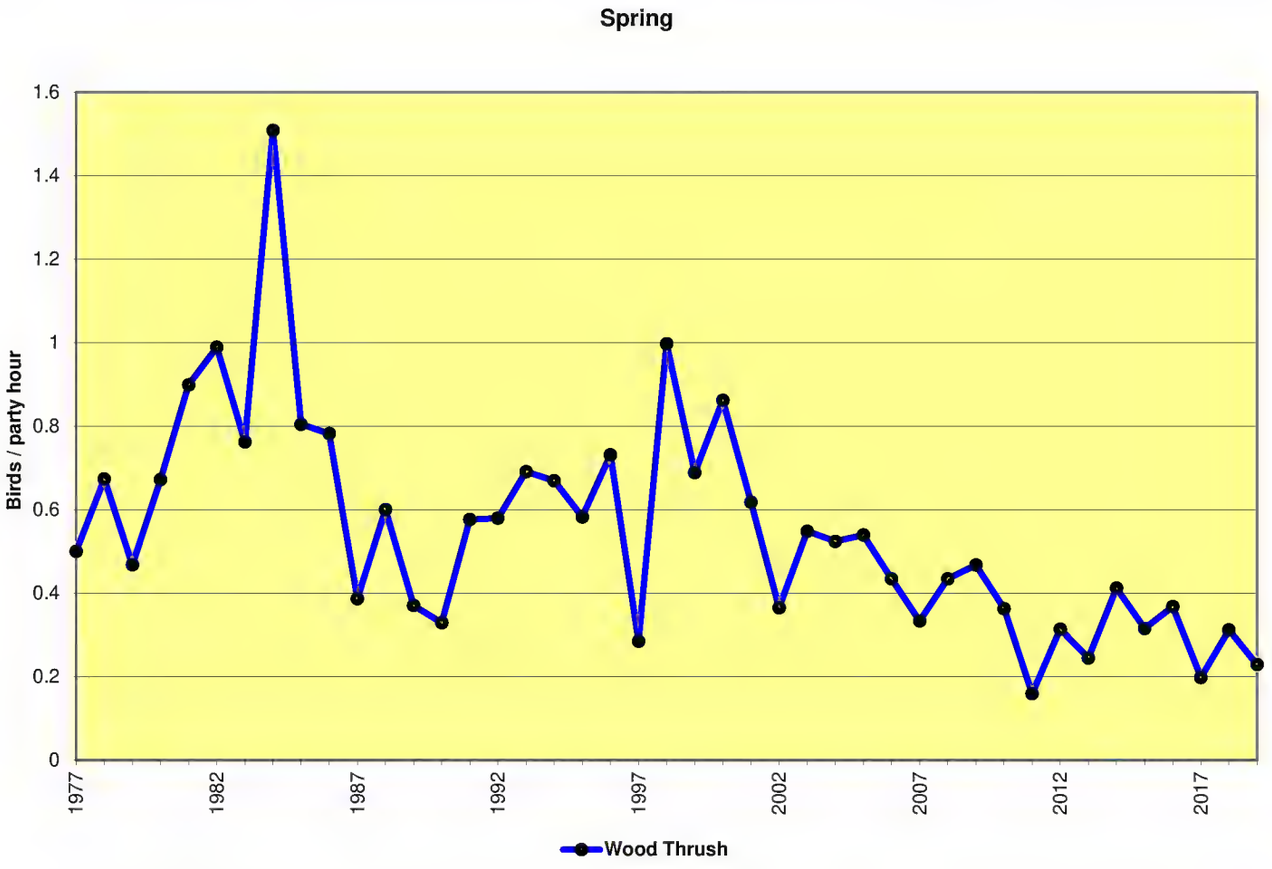

Figure 17. SBC, Wood Thrush

Discussion

The declining populations of the species discussed above are mostly symptomatic of more widespread declines of these species throughout their ranges. The data from our bird counts mirrors and supports the data from other sources like the North American Breeding Bird Survey and various state breeding bird atlases. In general, these declines appear to be the result of changes in land use practices either locally or in the wintering ranges of these species. Typical environmental changes include:

- Changes in agricultural practices such as
    - Plowing to the edge of fields, leaving no buffer zones of grassy or shrubby vegetation
    - Cleaner harvesting, leaving no remnant food for birds to glean
    - Extensive use of pesticides and herbicides
    - Mowing grasslands/pasture lands before ground-nesting species have finished raising their broods
- Maturation of old fields and second-growth forests into closed canopy pine or hardwood forests
- Clear-cutting of forests
- Fragmentation of forests
- Development of grasslands, agricultural lands, and forests for human habitations (suburbanization)
- Predation of ground nesting species by outdoor cats

An example of these changes in the Jordan Lake Count Circle is the expansion of housing and commercial development in the eastern part of the circle. Of course, the building of Jordan Lake itself resulted in major loss of riparian, river bottom habitat in favor of the lake and associated wetlands. Our data do not reach far enough back into the pre-lake days to show the results of those changes.

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Editor's Note:

B. Everett Jordan Lake Bird Counts – Part Two, published in Volume 85, Number 1, included trend lines on some of the graphs that did not translate correctly to .pdf format. Perhaps the graphs speak well enough on their own. We apologize for this error.

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Winter 2020-2021, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	*December 1–February 28*	*due March 20*
Spring	*March 1–May 31*	*due June 20*
Summer	*June 1–July 31*	*due August 20*
Fall	*August 1–November 30*	*due December 20*

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location),and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **CBC** – Christmas Bird Count, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **Mt** – Mount, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

All italicized place names are counties.

Ross's Goose: Six, possibly as many as eight, at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 29 Jan through 1 Feb (Cherrie Sneed, m. obs.) was a notable count for SC. Individuals on Land Harbor Lake *Avery* NC 16 Dec (Barbara Stewman) and on Lake Wallace *Marlboro* SC 4 Feb (Kevin Kubach) were firsts for those counties. At traditional wintering sites, six were seen in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Washington* NC 6 Dec (Ed Corey, Nate Watkins) with at least one continuing to 2 Jan (Mary & Ralph Erickson) and up to three were seen at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC in early January (m. obs.).

Greater White-fronted Goose: Sightings included two at Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 28 Jan through 11 Feb (Nathaniel Axtell, m. obs.), four in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 29 Jan through 6 Feb (Matt Johnson, m. obs.), two to three at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 10-23 Feb (Mike Resch, m. obs.), 16 in a field along the Yadkin River in Ronda *Wilkes* NC 15 Feb (Dale Reynolds), and eight at Ecusta Pond 21 Feb (Axtell, et al.). Interestingly, only one report was made from the NC coastal plain—an individual photographed in a field near Engelhard *Hyde* NC 4 Feb (Mary Thomson).

Cackling Goose: Sightings were made at several sites on the Albemarle Peninsula of NC from late December through January, including a high count of 14 in the area where US-64 crosses NC-1139 in *Washington* NC 7 Jan (Ryan Justice).

Trumpeter Swan: Individuals were seen at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC where photographed 3 Dec (Karl Bardon) and at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 5 Jan (Steven Joyner).

Tundra Swan: The southernmost report was from Bear Island WMA *Colleton* SC where the species was present throughout the period, with a high count of 101 made on 10 Feb (Elizabeth Anderegg). The westernmost report was of four on the southern end of Coddle Creek Reservoir *Cabarrus* NC 5 Dec (Patty Masten).

Blue-winged Teal x Cinnamon Teal (hybrid): A suspected hybrid drake was seen at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 5-6 Jan (Matt Janson, m. obs.).

Cinnamon Teal: A drake was seen at Donnelly WMA *Colleton* SC 26-28 Dec (Amber Von Harten, m. obs.).

Eurasian Wigeon: Individual drakes were seen at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC continuing from fall through at least 6 Jan (m. obs.), at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 2 Dec through 16 Jan (m. obs.), at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 19 Dec (Charles Donnelly), and at Rochelle Plantation *Georgetown* SC 6 Feb (Pam Ford, Craig Watson).

Green-winged Teal (Eurasian): One was seen at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 28 Nov (Sarah Toner) intermittently through 23 Feb (Daniel Irons).

Canvasback: Individuals on Mill Pond in Banner Elk *Avery* NC 14-19 Dec (Cody Porter, m. obs.) and at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 12 Jan through 17 Feb (Alan Lenk, m. obs.) were unusual for the mountain region.

King Eider: A hen was seen around the pilings of three fishing piers in *Dare* NC this winter—at Jennette's Pier 8 Dec (Phil Doer, Clyde Sorenson), at Rodanthe Pier 29 Dec (Strummer Edwards) and 17-18 Jan (m. obs.), and at Avon Fishing Pier 23-24 Jan (Ed Corey, m. obs.) and 6 Feb through 12 Mar (m. obs.). Sightings at all three sites likely involved the same individual.

King Eider, 8 Dec 2020, Jennette's Pier, Dare County, NC. Photo by Clyde Sorenson.

Common Eider: The species was well-reported this winter. Though the higher counts were made along the Outer Banks, sightings stretched down the length of the coast south to Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC, where a hen was photographed 24 Dec (Sarah Gustafson). Two at New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 21 Dec (Gilbert Grant) were unusual for that portion of the coast. The peak count this winter was nine, seven hens and two immature drakes, at Duck Research Pier *Dare* NC 17 Jan (Jeff Lewis).

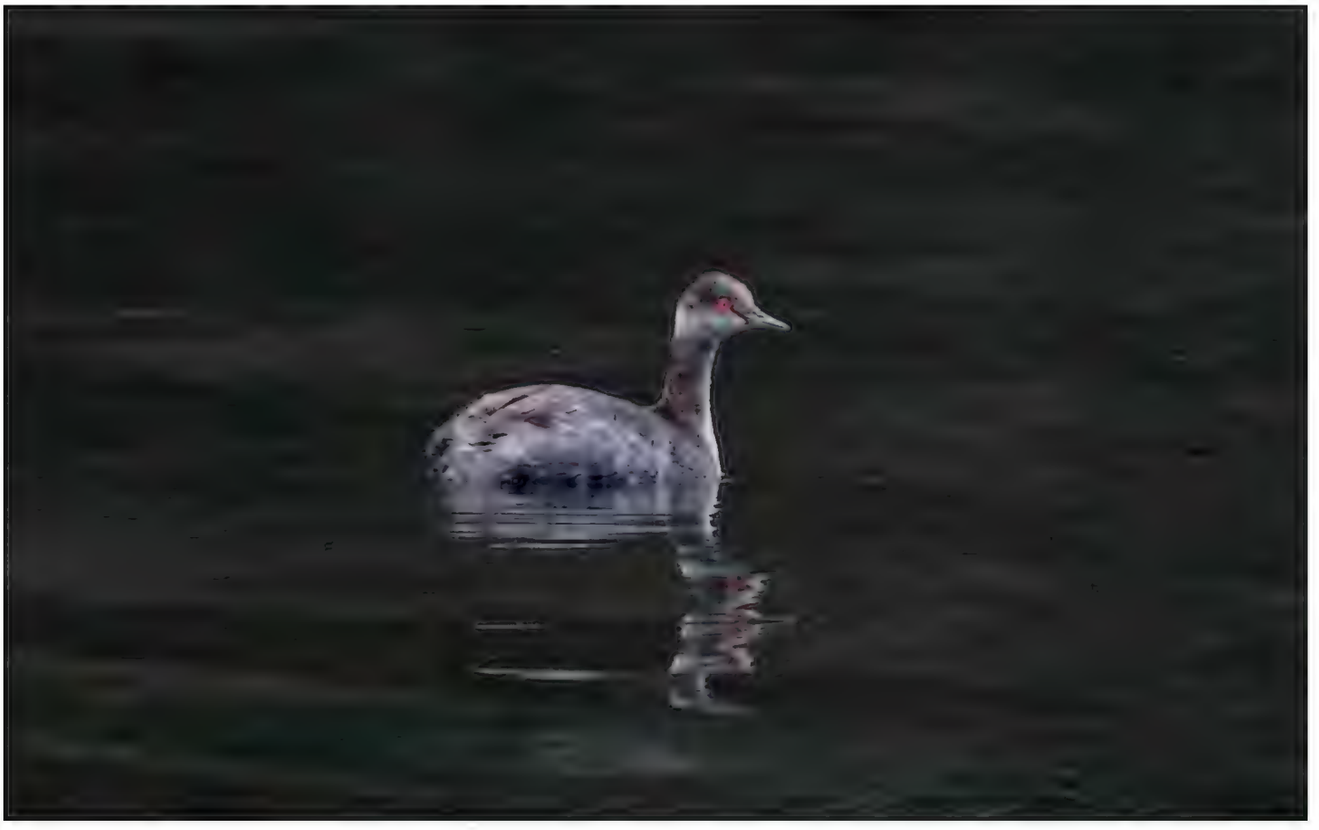
Harlequin Duck: Two drakes were seen in flight over the ocean at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC during the Bodie/Pea Island CBC 28 Dec (Jeff Lewis). An individual drake was seen around the remnants of the old Bonner Bridge at Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 27 Jan through 28 Feb (Peggy Eubank, m. obs.).

Surf Scoter: Inland sightings included one on Salem Lake *Forsyth* NC 3 Dec (Marbry Hopkins, m. obs.), three at Swann WTP *Forsyth* NC 18 Dec (Harvey Clodfelter, m. obs.), three on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 23 Dec (Matt Wangerin), one on Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 9 Jan (Harry LeGrand, m. obs.), and two on Salem Lake 27 Feb (Roberta Newton, Ann Van Sant).

White-winged Scoter: One on Salem Lake *Forsyth* NC 7-28 Feb (Jeff Palis, m. obs.) was a good find inland.

Long-tailed Duck: Locally unusual were two on Lake Edgar Brown *Barnwell* SC 27 Nov (Julie Mobley) through 2 Mar (Kevin Kubach), up to four at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 4 Dec into spring (m. obs.), four on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 6 Dec (Stephen Price, et al.), one at Falls Lake in *Durham* NC 27 Dec (Ricky Davis, m. obs.), one on Johns Island *Charleston* SC 6 Jan (Aaron Given), and one on Salem Lake *Forsyth* NC 16 Feb (Paul Beerman, m. obs.).

Eared Grebe: Individuals were seen at the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC continuing from fall through 16 Feb (Jay Chandler, m. obs.), on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 15 Dec into spring (Aaron Steed, m. obs.), on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 29 Jan through 6 Feb (Henry Link, Matt Wangerin, m. obs.), and in the surf at Cape Point *Dare* NC 26 Feb into spring (Daniel Irons, m. obs.).



Eared Grebe, 30 Jan 2021, Lake Julian, Buncombe County, NC.
Photo by Jamie Adams.

Western Grebe: Individuals were seen on the ocean from Bulls Island at Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 12 Dec (David McLean), just south of Corolla *Currituck* NC 24 Jan (Sarah Toner, m. obs.), at Cape Point *Dare* NC 9-11 Feb (Megan Baker, Daniel Irons, m. obs.), and, probably the same individual, in nearby Frisco *Dare* NC 20-25 Feb (Jesse Anderson, m. obs.).

White-winged Dove: Individuals visited feeders in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 6 Jan (Deb Winter) and in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 8 Jan (Patrick Carroll).

Nighthawk sp.: A nighthawk seen in flight over the soccer fields at Western Union Elementary School in southwest *Union* NC in the evening of 20 Jan (Chris Huffstickler) was extremely unusual for winter. The bird did not vocalize and could not be identified to species. Theoretically, a Lesser Nighthawk would be just as likely as a Common Nighthawk in the Carolinas in mid-winter.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: An immature female over-wintered in a yard in northern *Chatham* NC where it visited a feeder throughout the winter (Michele Gras). This report is the first of one spending an entire winter at an inland site in NC. Also inland was an immature male visiting a feeder in western *Orange* NC 11 Dec (Jeff Pippen) and an immature male visiting a feeder in Lewisville *Forsyth* NC 5-6 Jan (m. obs.), banded 6 Jan (Susan Campbell). A few of the higher counts made on CBCs along the coast were 29 on Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC 15 Dec (*fide* Susan Murphy), 39 in Kitty Hawk *Dare* NC 19 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis), and 31 at Cape Hatteras *Dare* NC 27 Dec (*fide* Karen Lebing, Pat Moore).

Black-chinned Hummingbird: Individuals visited feeders at three sites in central NC this winter, where also captured and banded—an immature male just southeast of Greensboro *Guilford* from late November through 20 Jan (*fide* Andrew Thornton, m. obs.) banded 22 Dec (Susan Campbell), a female in Apex *Wake* 1-11 Dec (Susan Davis) banded 11 Dec (Campbell), and an immature female just south of Clayton *Johnston* throughout the period (Debbie Losee) banded 21 Jan (Campbell).

Rufous Hummingbird: This species was well-reported this winter, mostly at sites in the Piedmont and foothills of NC. Two continued in the Bean Tract of Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC throughout the period (Dwayne Martin, m. obs.). Of interest, an adult female captured for banding in Asheville *Buncombe* NC 3 Dec (Mark Armstrong) was previously banded in Mobile Alabama 23 Dec 2018 and an adult female at Reedy Creek Park *Mecklenburg* NC 8 Dec into spring was previously banded near Baton Rouge Louisiana 2 Feb 2020 (*fide* Susan Campbell).

Allen's Hummingbird: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of an adult female visiting a feeder in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 25 Nov through 25 Feb (Crystal Kolarik) and banded 12 Dec (Susan Campbell). If accepted, the report would provide the fourth official record for NC, and first since 2014.

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird: A green-backed male visiting a feeder in northeastern *Pickens* SC 26 Nov through at least mid-December (John Batson) was the first *Selasphorus* hummingbird for that county.

King Rail: Up to two heard calling in a wet, early successional field along Tram Rd in *Lee* SC 6 Jan through 10 Mar (Kevin Kubach, m. obs.) were unusual for that area, somewhat unusual for a site so far from the coast in winter.

Limpkin: At least one continued at the north end of Goose Creek Reservoir *Berkeley* SC throughout the winter (m. obs.). Up to two were seen in the Island Green subdivision in southern *Horry* SC 10 Jan into spring (Dawne Dutton, m. obs.).

Sandhill Crane: Two wintered around Beaufort *Carteret* NC again this year, 14 Dec (Sally Anger) through 4 Mar (Mary & Ralph Erickson). Up to 11 were seen in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Hyde* and *Washington* NC throughout the winter (m. obs.). 11 in flight over Flat River Waterfowl Impoundment *Durham* NC 21 Dec (Derb Carter) was a notable count for the Triangle area. The high count in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC was 57 on 4 Feb (Alice Steinke).

Black-necked Stilt: About a dozen overwintered at Nemours Wildlife Foundation (restricted access) in northern *Beaufort* SC, with 15 there 11 Dec, eight there 28 Dec, nine there 10 Feb, and 12 there 26 Feb (Beau Bauer, John Bloomfield, Steven Guy).

Long-billed Curlew: It is likely that four birds wintered in *Carteret* NC this year. Two were seen in the Beaufort area, at Howland Rock 20 Dec (Chandra Biggerstaff, Amy Padgett) and 28 Feb (John Fussell, Curtiss Merrick), and at the Rachel Carson Reserve 20 Dec (Sam Cooper, Shun Endo). Two, presumably a different pair, were seen on the eastern end of Shackleford Banks 21 Feb (David Fischer).

Bar-tailed Godwit: The long-wintering individual on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC was seen 6 Feb (Derb Carter), 15 Feb (Jamie Adams), and 20 Feb (Matthew Winthrow, David Schroder).

Pectoral Sandpiper: Five at the Clemson Aquaculture Facility *Pickens* SC 23 Feb (Jean Askew, m. obs.) were rather early.

Spotted Sandpiper: Individuals at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC intermittently throughout the period (m. obs.), at McAlpine WTP *Mecklenburg* NC during the Charlotte CBC 26 Dec (Baxter Beamer, et al.), and along the Saluda Riverwalk *Richland* SC 20 Feb (Alan Lenk) were good finds for inland sites in winter. Individuals at the Bayboro WTP *Pamlico* NC 6 Dec (Christine Stoughton-Root, et al.) and in Morehead City *Carteret* NC 11-20 Dec (John Fussell, m. obs.) were the northernmost sightings near the coast.

Greater Yellowlegs: One at Lake Adger *Polk* NC 18 Dec (Nate Watkins) and one, possibly the same individual, at Lake Osceola *Henderson* NC 20 Dec (Wayne Forsythe, m. obs.) were unusual for the mountain region in winter.

Red Phalarope: One photographed on a pond in Plantersville *Georgetown* SC 19 Feb (Mark Johnson) was notable away from the ocean.

Great Skua: One photographed in eastbound flight over the ocean from Cape Point *Dare* NC 11 Feb (Daniel Irons) was a great find, as skuas are almost never seen from shore. One was seen during a pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 28 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Parasitic Jaeger: Nine in *Carteret* NC during the Morehead City CBC 20 Dec (*fide* John Fussell) was a record number for that count. Six off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 5 Dec (Ed Corey, Nate Watkins) was the highest count made at a single site.

Dovekie: Dovekies began showing up along our northern coast in very late December and were seen as far south as Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC by mid-January. The southernmost report was of one at Litchfield Beach *Georgetown* SC 27 Feb (Peter Stangel) and, probably the same individual, at nearby Murrells Inlet 4-11 Mar (m. obs.). The peak count this winter was 331, most in eastbound flight, off Cape Point *Dare* NC 9 Feb (Daniel Irons).

Dovekie, 6 Mar 2021, Georgetown County, SC.
Photo by Shawn Smolen-Morton.

Thick-billed Murre: A sick/injured individual was found on the beach at Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 4 Feb and taken to a wildlife rehabilitator (Liz Grimes).

Razorbill: This alcid began showing up along our northern coast in late December. The southernmost report was of one at Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC 14 Jan intermittently into spring (Sam Cooper, m. obs.). The peak count this winter was 2266 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 15 Feb (Daniel Irons).

Atlantic Puffin: Nine were seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 24 Jan and seven were seen on a pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 28 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Black-legged Kittiwake: A first-year bird was seen and photographed on the beach at Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC 12 Jan (Jamie Adams, m. obs.).

Black-headed Gull: There likely were two birds in *New Hanover* NC this winter—the continuing adult at Carolina Beach Lake from 7 Nov (Jamie Adams) through 1 Feb (Michelle Forte) and a presumably different adult at Mason Inlet 20 Jan (Jesse Anderson) intermittently through 12 Mar (Matt Spangler).

Little Gull: Individuals were seen at about half-a-dozen sites along the NC coast from mid-January through February. 11 on a pelagic trip out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 6 Mar (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.) was a notable count.

Laughing Gull: Large numbers lingered along the coast of *Carteret* NC into late December, evidenced by 5089 on the Morehead City CBC 20 Dec (*fide* John Fussell). Fussell states the high counts were "certainly due to the high level of shrimp trawling activity a few miles offshore."

Franklin's Gull: One photographed on the beach at Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve *Charleston* SC 14 Dec (David Nicosia) was a good find for winter.

Herring Gull: One in Boone *Watauga* NC 15 Feb (Adrianna Nelson, m. obs.) was unusual for the NC High Country.

Iceland Gull: Individuals were seen at multiple sites in *Dare* NC throughout the period, mostly around Cape Point. One photographed at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 12 Jan (Jamie Adams) was the only sighting made away from the Outer Banks this winter.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Farthest inland were individuals on Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 2 Jan (Jeffrey Greco), at Morrow Mountain SP *Stanly* NC 8 Feb (Martina Nordstrand), on Lake Tillery *Montgomery* and *Stanly* NC 9 Feb (Nordstrand), and on Lake Hickory in southern *Alexander* NC 10 Feb (Dwayne Martin).

Glaucous Gull: Multiple sightings were made at Cape Point *Dare* NC, beginning with one immature bird 27 Dec (Ed Corey) and continuing with two immature birds 6 Feb into spring (m. obs.). Elsewhere, an adult was seen at the south end of Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC 20 Feb (Jesse Anderson) and an immature bird was seen at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 7 Feb (Derb Carter) through 7 Mar (Ricky Davis).

Forster's Tern: One seen and photographed at Lake Adger *Polk* NC 30 Dec (Mike Resch, m. obs.) was very unusual for the mountain region in winter.

White-tailed Tropicbird: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of one seen in flight over the ocean from Coquina Beach *Dare* NC 9 Dec (Steven Joyner). If accepted, the report would provide the first winter record for NC.

Red-throated Loon: Individuals on Falls Lake in *Durham* NC 2-3 Dec (Tom Driscoll, m. obs.) and on Harris Lake *Wake* NC 13 Dec (Lynn Erla Beegle) were good finds for those inland lakes.

Pacific Loon: Multiple sightings were made at two sites in Wrightsville Beach *New Hanover* NC this winter—one to two at Masonboro Inlet 2 Jan through 27 Feb (Sam Cooper, Kevin Markham, m. obs.) and one to two at Johnnie Mercer's Pier 14 Jan into spring (Cooper, m. obs.). On 27 Feb, two were seen at Masonboro Inlet around the same time that one was seen at Johnnie Mercer's Pier (*fide* Jamie Adams), so it is likely that at least three birds wintered in that area. One off North Topsail Beach *Onslow* NC 9 Dec (Gilbert Grant) was unusual for that portion of the coast.

Northern Fulmar: On pelagic trips out of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC, 15 were seen 28 Feb and 22 were seen 6 Mar (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Sooty Shearwater: One photographed in flight off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 10 Feb (Conor Farrell, m. obs.) and one, possibly the same individual, seen at Cape Point *Dare* NC 12-13 Feb (Daniel Irons, m. obs.) were unusual for winter.

Manx Shearwater: A few were seen over the ocean from sites along the Outer Banks 10 Jan through February, with a peak count of five at Cape Point *Dare* NC 11 Feb (Daniel Irons.). Two over the ocean just south of Corolla *Currituck* NC 24 Jan (Sarah Toner), and four there 25 Jan (Matthew Withrow), were notable for that county.

Magnificent Frigatebird: An adult female photographed in flight over Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 31 Dec (Jeff Blalock, m. obs.) was very unusual for winter. Even more unusual was the report with photographs of an adult female over Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 8 Jan (Nathaniel Axtell). Pending review by the NC BRC, the latter report, if accepted, would provide the first record of this species in the mountain region. One wonders if the same wayward adult female was responsible for both of these reports.

Brown Booby: A first-year bird photographed at Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve *Charleston* SC 17 Dec (David Nicosia) was very unusual for winter. A sick/injured first-year bird found on Folly Beach *Charleston* SC where collected by a wildlife rehabilitator 27 Dec (Center for Birds of Prey) likely was that same individual.

Northern Gannet: 16,173 in flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 12 Feb (Daniel Irons) was a noteworthy count.

Great Cormorant: One photographed on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 4 Dec (Patty Masten, et al.) and on Lake Norman in neighboring *Lincoln* NC 27 Dec (Joe Girgente, et al.) was unusual for a site so far from the coast, a first for that lake and both counties. One at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC continuing from 28 Oct (Craig Watson) through 13 Dec (m. obs.) was notable for the southern portion of our coast.

American White Pelican: Five at Lake Twitty *Union* NC 11 Feb (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.) were a first for that county.

Great Egret: One on Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC until 7 Dec (Michael Plauché, et al.) was late for a site in the mountain region.

Green Heron: Inland sightings involved individuals at Patterson Place in *Durham* NC throughout the period (m. obs.), at Berry's Mill Pond *Greenville* SC 9-19 Dec (Michael Robertson, m. obs.), at Martin Marietta Quarry *Mecklenburg* NC during the Charlotte CBC 26 Dec (Baxter Beamer, et al.), at Lake Benson *Wake* NC 5-12 Jan (Duncan Fraser, m. obs.), and along Coley Rd in *Nash* NC 24-28 Feb (John Lynch, m. obs.).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: An adult at Crabtree Creek Wetland *Wake* NC 18-21 Jan (Lynn Erla Beegle, m. obs.) was unusual for the Piedmont region in winter.

Roseate Spoonbill: The peak count this winter was nine at Donnelley WMA *Colleton* SC 9 Feb (Ann Truesdale).

Golden Eagle: Individuals were seen at Congaree National Park *Richland* SC 20 Jan (John Grego), in Pisgah National Forest *Transylvania* NC 24 Jan (Miles Groff), and at the Savannah River Site *Aiken* SC 4 Feb (Matt Malin).

Red-tailed Hawk (Krider's): Individuals were seen and photographed in the Brown Creek Valley area of *Union* NC 27 Dec through 4 Feb (Baxter Beamer, Martina Nordstrand), in the Combahee Unit of Ace Basin NWR *Beaufort* SC 29 Dec (Tammy Hester), and on the north side of Lake Phelps *Washington* NC 30 Dec and 21 Jan (Ed Corey).

Rough-legged Hawk: Continuing from fall was the dark-morph individual at Pond Mountain Game Land *Ashe* NC through 23 Dec (Rob Rogers) and the light-morph individual at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC through 7 Mar (m. obs.).

Snowy Owl: Sightings were made at three sites along the NC coast—at Pea Island NWR *Dare* 29 Dec through 3 Jan (m. obs.), on the southern end of Ocracoke Island *Hyde* 12 Jan (*fide* Peter Vankevich) through 18 Jan (Derb Carter), and on the Core Banks near Ophelia Inlet *Carteret* 7 Feb (Evan Knight, Jill Jaworski) through 17 Mar (Jon Altman, et al.). Because there was no overlap in dates of sightings between sites, it's likely all sightings involved the same individual.

Snowy Owl, 14 Jan 2021, Hyde County, NC.
Photo by Peter Vankevich.

Short-eared Owl: Nine at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 17 Jan (Ricky Davis) was good count. Up to three were seen in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC throughout the period (m. obs.). Up to three were also seen in the Brown Creek Valley area of *Union* NC 29 Dec into March (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.). One photographed at the Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center *Haywood* NC 31 Dec (Carl Miller) and one seen along Red Hill-Mt Vernon Rd in *Anson* NC 26-30 Jan (Matt Janson, m. obs.) were firsts for those counties.

Ash-throated Flycatcher: This species was well-reported again this winter. At sites in the coastal plain, individuals were seen along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 3 Dec (Nate Swick) through 23 Jan (David Schroder), at Magnolia Gardens *Charleston* SC 10 Dec (Marc Regnier), at the northern end of Milltail Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 22 Dec through 19 Jan (Michelle Payne, m. obs.), along US-264 near Lake Landing *Hyde* NC during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC 29 Dec (Allen Bryan), in a closed area of Alligator River NWR during its CBC 30 Dec (Jeff Lewis), on the western side of Lake Phelps *Washington* NC during the Pettigrew SP CBC 30 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, et al.), along Shepherd Rd in *Brunswick* NC 31 Dec through 15 Jan (Robert Cowan, m. obs.), along Sunny Point Rd in *Brunswick* NC during the Southport/Bald Head/Oak Islands CBC 3 Jan (Sam Cooper), just south of Clinton *Sampson* NC 15 Jan through 8 Feb (Sharon Funderburk), at a different site in *Sampson* NC 20 Jan through 16 Feb (Judi Nicholson), and at Martin Marietta Park *Craven* NC 21-24 Jan (Michael Cheves, m. obs.). One photographed at McAlpine WTP *Mecklenburg* NC during the Charlotte CBC 26 Dec (Matt Janson, et al.) was a great find for the Piedmont region.

***Myiarchus* sp.**: A *Myiarchus* flycatcher was photographed in flight at Lake Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC 17 Jan (Julian Plasencia).

Western Kingbird: Individuals were seen at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 11 Dec through 1 Jan (Wayne Hoffman, m. obs.), along Florence Rd in *Pamlico* NC 15 Dec through 7 Jan (Christine Stoughton-Root, m. obs.), in Vance *Orangeburg* SC during the Santee NWR CBC 22 Dec (Sidney Gauthreaux), in a yard in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 13-28 Feb (Nancy Appel, m. obs.), on Parris Island *Beaufort* SC 17-21 Feb (Steven Guy).

Gray Kingbird: One photographed on Bald Head Island *Brunswick* NC 1 Dec (Ella Doud) was the first ever reported in the Carolinas during the winter period.

Vermilion Flycatcher: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of an immature male seen and photographed by many around a horse pasture just southwest of Williamston *Martin* NC 8 Dec through 8 Feb (Bob Koch, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide NC with its sixth official record and first since 2010.

Vermilion Flycatcher, 11 Dec 2020, near Williamston, Martin County, NC. Photo by Jamie Adams.

Bell's Vireo: Pending review by the NC BRC are two were reports made at opposite ends of the state in early December—one at Airlie Gardens *New Hanover* NC 5 Dec (Wayne Hoffman) and 6 Dec (Jamie Adams) and one along the Canie Creek Greenway in western Asheville *Buncombe* NC 8 Dec (Miles Buddy).

Blue-headed Vireo: 48 in *Calhoun* and *Richland* SC during the Congaree Swamp CBC 20 Dec (*fide* John Grego, Kathleen O'Grady) was a notable winter total and a record number for that count.

Purple Martin: One seen and photographed at Carolina Beach Lake *New Hanover* NC 2 Feb (Jamie Adams) was rather early.

Barn Swallow: One photographed along Stevens Mill Rd in *Wayne* NC 3 Dec (Phil Doerr) was very late for a site away from the coast. One seen among Tree Swallows at Lake Sutton *New Hanover* NC 17 Jan (Sam Cooper) was very unusual for mid-winter.

Cliff Swallow: One seen at Kinloch Plantation *Georgetown* SC during the Winyah Bay CBC 17 Dec (Pam Ford, Craig Watson) was extremely unusual for winter. There are only two previous records of this species in the Carolinas during the winter period.

Cave Swallow: 28 in *Georgetown* SC, including a flock of 20 at Yawkey Wildlife Center (Chris Hill, et al.), during the Winyah Bay CBC 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover) was a remarkable total. Other sightings included one in Garden City *Horry* SC 2 Dec (Ritch Lilly), six at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 5 Dec (Simon Thompson, et al.), one or two at Federal Point at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 17 Dec (Dale Lambert, Wayne Hoffman), three at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 19 Dec (Brad Sale, m. obs.), two at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 20 Dec (Lilly), and one along the Cape Fear River near Orton Plantation *Brunswick* NC during the Wilmington CBC 2 Jan (Sam Cooper, Kevin Markham). One among Tree Swallows at Rochelle Plantation *Georgetown* SC 6 Feb (Pam Ford, Craig Watson) was very unusual so late in the winter.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: This winter's irruption was evidenced by higher than usual counts on multiple CBCs including 138 on the Kitty Hawk CBC 19 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis), 103 on the Chapel Hill CBC 27 Dec (*fide* Will Cook), and 16 on the Lake Wateree CBC 2 Jan (*fide* Lex Glover).

Sedge Wren: One at Lake Adger *Polk* NC 9 Dec (Nate Watkins) was late for a site in the mountain region.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: One near Marion *McDowell* NC 18 Jan (Art Webster) was the farthest inland reported this winter.

Swainson's Thrush: Quite late were individuals photographed near Nowell Creek *Berkeley* SC 2 Dec (Bob Dellinger), at Airlie Gardens *New Hanover* NC 6 Dec (Jamie Adams, Sam Cooper), and at 17 Acre Woods *Durham* NC 3 Dec (Vic Nebes) through 18 Dec (Suzanne Roberts).

Varied Thrush: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of an apparent Varied Thrush seen and photographed by many in a yard in Cary *Wake* NC 3 Dec into spring (Tony Hewitt, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide NC with its fifth official record and first since 2010.

Varied Thrush, 4 Dec 2020, Cary, Wake County, NC. Photo by Kent Fiala.

Evening Grosbeak: The irruption that started in November continued into winter with sightings made at dozens of sites, mostly in the northern half of NC. Up to six visiting a feeder in *Craven* NC 2-4 Feb (m. obs.) and 26 in a yard in *Montgomery* NC 27 Feb (Martina Nordstrand) provided the first records of this species for those counties. One heard calling in flight over a yard in Columbia *Richland* SC 28 Dec (John Grego) was the southernmost report.

Purple Finch: Like other irruptive finches, this species was well-reported this winter. Record counts were made on five CBCs in SC including 86 on the Keowee CBC 2 Jan (*fide* Scott Davis, Stephen Schutt). Other notable counts included 83 at Prairie Ridge Ecostation *Wake* NC 10 Jan (Brian O'Shea), 60 in Gloucester *Carteret* NC 26 Jan (Barbara Pigott), 80 in eastern *Brunswick* NC 1 Feb (Greg Massey), and 100 in northern *Greenville* SC 7 Feb (Gary Harbour).

Common Redpoll: Three were reported this winter—one heard calling at Fletcher Park *Henderson* NC 10 Dec (Mike Resch), one seen and photographed along Sawyer Lake Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 17 Dec (Pat Draisey, m. obs.), and one seen and photographed by many in Taylorsville *Alexander* NC 18-23 Feb (Doug Hochmuth, m. obs.).

Common Redpoll, 20 Feb 2021, Alexander County, NC. Photo by Jim Shepard.

Red Crossbill: Crossbills were reported at a few scattered sites outside of the mountains, mainly in northern NC. A few of the higher counts included up to 20 at Flat River Waterfowl Impoundment *Durham* NC 19 Dec through 23 Jan (Angie Holt, m. obs.), up to 25 at Kitty Hawk Woods Coastal Reserve *Dare* NC in late December (m. obs.) including 15 "Type 10" birds 20 Dec (Jeff Lewis), 24 around the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 27 Dec (Marc Ribaudo), and 28 at that same site 29 Jan (Derb Carter). Farthest south were 14 in western *Pickens* SC 24 Jan (Carole Alexander, *fide* Dale Wilde).

Pine Siskin: Like other irruptive finches, siskins were well-reported this winter. The high count was 630 at Fants Grove WMA *Anderson* SC 16 Feb (Kevin Kubach).

Lapland Longspur: One along Hooper Lane in *Henderson* NC 9 Jan (Kevin Burke) was the only one reported this winter.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Individuals along Howerton Rd in *Guilford* NC 17 Dec and 31 Dec (Andrew Thornton) and in southeastern *Oconee* SC 10 Feb (Kevin Kubach) were unusual for the Piedmont region in winter.

Lark Sparrow: Only one was seen at the traditional wintering site along Alder Branch Rd in *Camden* NC this winter, where up to six were seen last winter (James Harrison). Individuals in Hemingway *Williamsburg* SC 31 Dec through 17 Feb (Jay Chandler, m. obs.) and in northeastern *Beaufort* NC 4 Feb (Lester Coble, m. obs.) were firsts for those counties. Two were seen in Conetoe *Edgecombe* NC 24-30 Jan (Ann Brice, m. obs.). One along Watchtower Rd in southern *Guilford* NC 1 Feb (Andrew Thornton, et al.) was unusual for the Piedmont in winter.

Clay-colored Sparrow: Individuals were reported at five sites in eastern NC this winter.

LeConte's Sparrow: Individuals were seen and photographed at Rea Farms in southern *Mecklenburg* NC continuing from fall through 6 Mar (Baxter Beamer, Martina Nordstrand), at Pee Dee NWR *Anson* NC during its CBC 2 Jan (Matt Janson, et al.), and in central *Dorchester* SC 29 Jan (Matt Johnson).

Yellow-breasted Chat: One at Williamson Preserve *Wake* NC 3 Dec (Dale Lambert) and 12 Dec (Ed Corey) was unusual for a site so far from the coast in winter.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Individuals were seen along Gay Rd in *Edgecombe* NC during the Rocky Mount CBC 18 Dec (Brian Bockhahn), on the western side of Lake Phelps *Washington* NC during the Pettigrew SP CBC 30 Dec (Don Rote, *fide* Ed Corey), and at Lowe's Park in Wilkesboro *Wilkes* NC 3 Jan (Guy McGrane).

Western Meadowlark: One heard singing at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 23 Jan (Brian Barchus) through 23 Feb (Irvin Pitts) was almost certainly the same individual reported there in November.

Bullock's Oriole: Individuals visited feeders at six sites this winter. Those sightings involved an immature male near Bluffton *Beaufort* SC continuing from fall through 14 Dec (Kevin Brady), an immature male on James Island *Charleston* SC from early December through at least mid-February (Lora C.), an immature male in northeastern *Gaston* NC 8-28 Dec (Angie Davis, m. obs.), an adult male in Morehead City *Carteret* NC 20 Dec through 4 Feb (Sam Cooper, Shun Endo, m. obs.), one in Mebane *Alamance* NC 30 Dec (*fide* Nate Swick), and an immature male just southeast of Huntersville *Mecklenburg* NC 29 Dec through 23 Mar (Jeanie McCoy, m. obs.). The immature males in *Gaston* and *Mecklenburg* were likely the same individual, as the two sites were only

three miles apart and there was no overlap in dates of sightings. The bird in Carteret, according to the homeowner, was present the two previous winters.

Bullock's Oriole, 1 Jan 2021, Morehead City, Carteret County, NC. Photo by Jamie Adams.

Baltimore Oriole: Record counts were made on several CBCs in SC including 28 on the Pee Dee Area CBC 20 Dec (*fide* Shawn Smolen-Morton) and 32 on the Lower Saluda CBC 26 Dec (*fide* Kent Bedenbaugh).

Ovenbird: Individuals in northern *Greenville* SC 4 Dec through 31 Jan (Gary Harbour) and in southwestern *Guilford* NC 14 Dec and 9 Jan (Carrie Council) were very unusual for sites away from the coast in winter. Seven at Buxton Woods *Dare* NC 20 Feb (Daniel Irons) was a good count for that traditional wintering site.

Louisiana Waterthrush: One heard singing and then seen in southwestern *Fairfield* SC 25 Feb (Kevin Kubach) was rather early.

Northern Waterthrush: Individuals were seen at five sites along or near the SC coast. Five at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 2 Jan (Lauren Morgens, Matthew Sarver) was a notable count. One photographed at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 23 Jan (Jamie Adams) was unusual for NC.

Black-and-white Warbler: Lingering/over-wintering by this species has increased in recent years. This winter, hundreds of sightings were made in the Piedmont and coastal plain regions of both states. High counts on CBCs in SC included 30 on the Hilton Head Island CBC 15 Dec (*fide* Susan Murphy), 22 on the Congaree Swamp CBC 20 Dec (*fide* John Grego, Kathleen O'Grady), and 14 on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill). 16 at Buxton Woods *Dare* NC 24 Feb (Daniel Irons) was a notable count for NC in winter.

Tennessee Warbler: Individuals were seen and photographed at four sites in NC this winter—at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* 13 Dec (Mary Kay Flick), in a yard in Charlotte *Mecklenburg* 27-29 Jan (Jim Guyton), at a feeder in New Bern *Craven* 3-15 Feb (Michael Cheves, Al Gamache), and at a feeder just south of Raleigh *Wake* 19 Feb (Robert Oberfelder).

Orange-crowned Warbler: Individuals at Mills River Park *Henderson* NC 23 Jan (Tim Novak) and 23 Feb (Timothy Carstens) and at Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 17 Feb (Aaron Steed, Simon Thompson) were unusual for mountain region in late winter. A few of the higher counts at sites along the coast were 14 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 2 Jan (Lauren Morgens, Matthew Sarver), 20 in *Charleston* SC during the Sea Islands CBC 4 Jan (*fide* Aaron Given), nine at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 17 Jan (John Fussell, et al.), and 19 at Buxton Woods *Dare* NC 24 Feb (Daniel Irons).

Nashville Warbler: Three were reported this winter. Individuals were seen at Ft Caswell *Brunswick* NC during the Southport/Bald Head/Oak Islands CBC 3 Jan (Ron Clark, Stephen Pollock), in the I'On Swamp *Charleston* SC 7 Jan (Michael Adams), and at Pine Island Audubon Sanctuary *Currituck* NC 24 Jan (Sarah Toner).

MacGillivray's Warbler, 12 Dec 2020, Duck Park Boardwalk, Dare County, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

MacGillivray's Warbler: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of an apparent MacGillivray's Warbler seen and photographed by many along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 3 Dec through 30 Jan (Nate Swick, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the fourth official record for NC and first since 2012.

Common Yellowthroat: Individuals at Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 12-17 Dec (Aaron Steed, m. obs.) and near Brevard *Transylvania* NC 22 Jan through 23 Feb (Michael Plauché, m. obs.) were unusual for the mountain region in winter. 36 in *Georgetown* SC during the Winyah Bay CBC 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover) was a notable count for winter.

American Redstart: An adult male on Fripp Island *Beaufort* SC 20 Feb (Alex Burdo) was the only one reported this winter.

Cape May Warbler: Individuals were seen and photographed at four sites this winter—at a feeder in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 13 Dec through 20 Jan (Deb Winter), in a yard in Cary *Wake* NC 29 Jan (Rob Rybczynski), at a feeder in western *Johnston* NC from late January into spring (Chip Braswell, *fide* Clyde Sorenson), and at a feeder in northern Raleigh *Wake* NC 14 Feb through 17 Mar (Sharon Kennedy).

Northern Parula: Individuals lingered at multiple sites along the length of the Carolina coast until mid-December. One likely over-wintered in a yard in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC, seen 5 Dec intermittently through 7 Mar (Sam Cooper). Individuals in *Richland* SC during the Congaree Swamp CBC 20 Dec (Jon Manchester), at Lake Lynn *Wake* NC 26 Dec (Duncan Fraser), and along the Neuse River Greenway *Wake* NC 11 Jan (Geneva Pigott) were unusual for inland sites in winter. Migrants began showing up at sites in southern SC in late February, with multiple reports made 24-28 Feb (m. obs.).

Yellow Warbler: One photographed near the dam on Lake Murray *Lexington* SC 8 Feb (Irvin Pitts) was the only one reported this winter.

Blackpoll Warbler: Individuals at River Park North *Pitt* NC where photographed 5 Dec (Caleb Bronsink) and in northeastern *Craven* NC 11 Dec (Lester Coble) were quite late.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: An adult male visited a feeder in Chapel Hill *Orange* NC 30 Dec through 21 Feb (Robert Christian).

Yellow-throated Warbler: Farthest inland this winter were individuals visiting a feeder in southern *Wilkes* NC throughout the winter for a second year in a row (Sue Crowell), visiting a feeder in Chapel Hill *Orange* NC throughout the winter for a fourth year in a row (Barbara & Tom Driscoll), visiting a feeder in *York* SC 4 Dec (Bill Hilton), in southeastern *Greenville* SC 5 Dec (Simon Harvey), at Davidson College *Mecklenburg* NC during the Southern Lake Norman CBC 20 Dec (Greg Hays, Taylor Piephoff), in a yard in Raleigh *Wake* NC 30 Dec and 22 Jan (Jeff Mielke), along Watchtower Rd in *Guilford* NC 7-16 Feb (Andrew Thornton), and visiting a feeder in Greensboro *Guilford* NC in late February (Trent Stevens).

Prairie Warbler: Birds lingered at multiple sites along the coast into December, some into January and February. Four in *Georgetown* SC during the Winyah Bay CBC 17 Dec (*fide* Lex Glover) was a record number for that count. Individuals at the NC Zoological Park *Randolph* NC 17 Jan (Cameron Harper) and at Apex Community Park *Wake* NC 16 Feb into spring (Trenton Voytko, m. obs.) were unusual for the Piedmont region in winter.

Black-throated Gray Warbler: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of an apparent Black-throated Gray Warbler seen and photographed by many on the north end of Roanoke Island *Dare* NC 19 Dec through 24 Jan (Jeff Lewis, m. obs.). Interestingly, this report is the second of 2020, the first made only three months prior in *Mecklenburg* NC 6-7 Sep.

Black-throated Gray Warbler, 24 Dec 2020, Roanoke Island, Dare County, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

Townsend's Warbler: One seen and photographed by many at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 22 Dec through 6 Jan (Wendy Allen, m. obs.) was a fantastic find. The report, already accepted by the SC BRC, provides the first official record for the state. Notably, of the five accepted records in the Carolinas, this record is the first for the winter period, or any period outside of fall.

Black-throated Green Warbler: Individuals photographed in a yard in Cary *Wake* NC 12 Jan (Eddie Owens) and at Charles Towne Landing *Charleston* SC 23 Jan (Marc Regnier) were great finds for winter. Two in Buxton Woods *Dare* NC 20 Feb (Daniel Irons) were unprecedented for the month of February. Were these birds over-wintering in that area, or were they extremely early migrants?

Wilson's Warbler: Individuals were reported at seven sites this winter—in a yard in northeastern *Henderson* NC 1-26 Dec (Mike Resch), at 17 Acre Woods *Durham* NC 2-17 Dec (Dan Kaplan, m. obs.), at Airlie Gardens *New Hanover* NC 6 Dec through 28 Feb (Jamie Adams, m. obs.), at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 27 Dec (Cherrie Sneed), at Sea Pines Forest Preserve *Beaufort* SC 28 Dec (Lynn Hodgson), in a yard south of Raleigh *Wake* NC 9 Jan (Phil Doerr), and at River Park North *Pitt* NC 17-24 Jan (Caleb Bronsink). The bird at Airlie Gardens was most unusual as it apparently spent the entire winter at that site.

Summer Tanager: Visiting feeders throughout the winter were two in West Columbia *Lexington* SC (Allison Smith, m. obs.), one in eastern *Brunswick* NC for the seventh winter in a row (Greg Massey), one on Daniel Island *Berkeley* SC (Tate Curry), and one in Chapel Hill *Orange* NC (Catherine Lohmann). Other sightings included one visiting a feeder at Myrtle Beach SP *Horry* SC 20 Dec through 19 Jan (Wendy Allen, m. obs.), one at a feeder in West Ashley *Charleston* SC 20 Dec (Michael Herlocker), one in a yard on Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC 31 Dec (Mary Alice Tartler), one at Brick Pond Park *Aiken* SC 22-23 Jan (Jamie Lynn Riedy), and one at a feeder in New Bern *Craven* NC 17-20 Feb (Tom & Anna Leith).

Western Tanager: Individuals were reported at nearly two dozen sites this winter. Individuals visited feeders where photographed in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC throughout the period (Deb Winter, m. obs.), near Varnamtown *Brunswick* NC for a second year in a row intermittently throughout the winter (Martha Myers), in Irmo *Lexington* SC 13 Dec through 14 Feb (Ellys Haynes), in Columbia *Richland* SC 17 Dec through 20 Feb (Alice Steinke, m. obs.), in Apex *Wake* NC 19 Dec (Susan Campbell, Steve Shultz) and 20 Feb (Pam Callahan), in southeastern *Dorchester* SC 25 Dec through 26 Feb (Bill Demas, m. obs.), in northwestern *Davidson* NC 29 Dec through 8 Mar (Mercedes Cosgrove, *fide* Ron Morris), in Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC for a second year in a row 7 Jan through 17 Feb (m. obs.), in Folly Beach *Charleston* SC 10 Jan through 3 Feb (Nancy Young, m. obs.), in *Greenwood* SC 2-7 Feb (Robert Gooding), on the Isle of Palms *Charleston* SC 3 Feb (Laura Judson), in Chapel Hill *Orange* NC 14 Feb (Shirley Werner), and in Concord *Cabarrus* NC 22 Feb (Denise Bordeman). Away from feeders, individuals were photographed along the Duck Park Boardwalk *Dare* NC 6 Dec (Lesley Starke, Johnny Wilson), at Carolina Beach Lake *New Hanover* NC 4-7 Jan (Ryan Justice, m. obs.), in Porter's Neck *New Hanover* NC 16-17 (Ed Corey, m. obs.), on Roanoke Island *Dare* NC 21 Jan (Judy Moore), and in Wrightsville Beach *New Hanover* NC 29 Jan (Will Taber).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Individuals visiting feeders in Morehead City *Carteret* 16-18 Dec (Carol Reigle), in upstate SC during the Keowee CBC 2 Jan (*fide* Scott Davis, Stephen Schutt), in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 10 Jan (John Scavetto), and in Hemingway *Williamsburg* SC 16 Jan (Rose & Tony Johnson) were very unusual for winter.

Blue Grosbeak: Two along Stanford Rd in *Orange* NC 13 Dec (Jan Hansen) through 14 Jan (Maria de Bruyn) and two along Brickhouse Rd in *Durham* NC 23 Dec (Roger Shaw) were unusual for winter.

Indigo Bunting: Individuals in *Cumberland* NC during its CBC 17 Dec (Brian Bockhahn), at Cypress Point on Lake Phelps *Washington* NC during the Pettigrew SP CBC 30 Dec (Bockhahn, et al.), and visiting a feeder at Francis Beidler Forest *Dorchester* SC 10-12 Feb (Matt Johnson, m. obs.) were unusual for winter.

Painted Bunting: 60+ were reported in *Carteret* NC this winter, mostly visiting feeders, including counts of nine in two yards around Morehead City (*fide* John Fussell). Farthest inland was an adult male visiting a feeder in downtown Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC 14-19 Feb (Jillian Teta, m. obs.).

Dickcissel: One visited a feeder for several weeks on Sullivan's Island *Charleston* SC 29 Nov through 5 Jan (Elizabeth Anderegg, m. obs.). One in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 7 Dec (Martina Nordstrand, Nate Watkins) was unusual for the Piedmont region.

50 Years Ago in The Chat

Steve Shultz
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Spring 1971. The Soviet Union, led by Leonid Brezhnev, launched the world's first space station, Salyut I. The conflict in Vietnam was in its 16th year, and while many eyes were focused on Southeast Asia, the Weather Underground exploded a bomb in the Unites States Capitol Building (no, not the Weather Underground that we rely on for tomorrow's forecast!). Led Zepplin performed *Stairway to Heaven* for the first time in concert, and customers of the newly available Honda motor vehicles could choose from two models, the 4-door N600 or the 2-door Z600. The cars featured a 2-cylinder engine producing 36 horsepower. Wisdom, the famed Laysan Albatross, was already an estimated 21 years old.

The March 1971 issue of The Chat (naming convention had not yet changed to reflect seasons) featured a drawing of a Red-breasted Nuthatch surveying mountain scenery. The artist was H. Douglas Pratt. Doug authored the lead article *Additional Notes on the Birds of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina* and notes the first record of breeding Barn Swallow from the North Carolina portion of the park.

Gilbert S. Grant documented a *Three-year Study of the Heronry at Alligator Bay, N.C.* and provides notes on the "vaguely known subject" of young Cattle Egrets with black bills.

Results of the 1970 Christmas Bird Count were documented by Eloise Potter. Charleston, SC and Wilmington, NC tied for the most species, 156, with Bodie-Pea Island coming in third with 151 species. An immature Great Cormorant found on the Bodie-Pea Island count represented the first sight record for North Carolina. 255,137 individual birds were counted, but, as Potter notes, this pales in comparison with the more than three million birds counted in 1963, largely due to an impressive blackbird roost near Greensboro, NC.

Briefs for the Files noted that a pair of Bald Eagles appeared engaged in nest building activity at Lake Mattamuskeet in North Carolina; a Black Rail was flushed the prior November just south of High Point in Guilford County, NC; the tally of Bonaparte's Gulls at Roanoke Rapids Lake in North Carolina was one; the first Least Flycatchers banded at a station in Hillsborough, NC since 1958 were noted in September 1970 (Harry LeGrand reported three sight records in Raleigh that same month); and Jay Carter reported finding several dead Henslow's Sparrows at the WECT television tower in Bladen County, NC, which were deposited in the collection of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Annual membership to the Carolina Bird Club cost $3.00, with life memberships available for $100. The Chat contained no photographs, but featured drawings of Yellow-breasted Chat, Carolina Parakeet, Swallow-tailed Kit, and Ruffed Grouse.

CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

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The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

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- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
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The Chat

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General Field Notes

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Cover: White-tailed Tropicbird off NC Coast, by Kate Sutherland

Possible First Record of Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) Nesting in North Carolina

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Introduction

Several lines of evidence suggest that Merlins (*Falco columbarius*) successfully nested at Linville Land Harbor, in Avery County, NC, in summer 2020. If true, this would be the first known breeding record for the state of North Carolina (LeGrand et al. 2020), and would appear to be, by approximately 150-200 miles, the farthest south breeding record for the species (eBird 2020). Possible evidence for breeding includes observation by experienced birders of three Merlins together exhibiting begging/feeding behavior on 1 August, photo documentation of Merlins practicing flights uncharacteristic of migration on 3 August, along with verbal descriptions of that flight in full, and verbal descriptions of the loud and raucous calling behavior that often characterizes Merlin families at the nesting grounds during the time in question.

Background

The historical breeding range of the Merlin in eastern North America includes Canada and only the northernmost fringe of the US (Peterson 1980; Sibley 2000). Data from the United States Geological Survey (2020) estimate that populations have increased by a factor of five since the 1960's and have doubled since the late 1990's. By 2020, eBird breeding range maps included the mountains of NY, PA, and WV, with a small presence in VA (eBird 2020).

Peak spring migration occurs roughly from mid-March to mid-April but can occur from mid-February until early May. Peak fall migration is from late August to late September but can occur from late June through early November. Breeding can occur from March through early September, with young present from April through early September. (Warkentin et al. 2020). See Figure 1.

The sightings mentioned in this report occurred in early June and spanned the entire month of August. The single early June report is well within the breeding window, since migration is not expected to take place at that time.

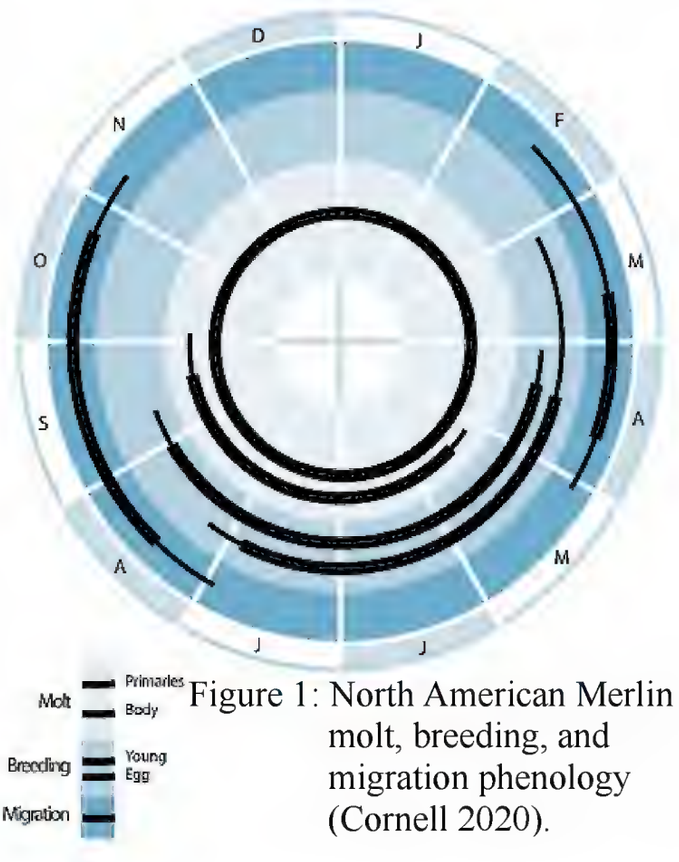

Figure 1: North American Merlin molt, breeding, and migration phenology (Cornell 2020).

The August reports, while within the earliest time frame for fall migration, more closely align with the breeding season. There is only one other August eBird report in the most northwestern NC counties from 2012. Other eBird sightings have been later in the year during migration (2021).

Sightings

On 28 April, John Frazier photographed a Merlin in flight above Land Harbor Lake in Linville, NC. This Merlin appeared fairly pale in color and may or may not be related to subsequent sightings. Frazier again observed, without photographing, a Merlin on 8 June perched on a small snag by the waterline on the northern shore of the lake by the clubhouse. It was being mobbed by smaller birds for several minutes. There were no more sightings until almost two months later.

Figure 2: Image of Merlin perched at typical snag. Photo courtesy of Dean Stewman.

On 1 August, Barbara and Dean Stewman observed three Merlins for over an hour, two of which seemed to be harassing an adult and exhibiting "feeding or begging behavior". One of the birds, assumed to be adult based on darker, more contrasting plumage, remained perched on a dead snag (Fig. 2) for much of the time. The Stewmans also noted that all three birds gave a "kee-kee-kee" call very "loudly" and "raucously" (Stewman and Stewman, pers. comm., 14 October 2020). Merlins, although typically silent, most commonly give the "ki-ki-kee" call, which can be used in a variety of situations, including courtship, territory, or other agonistic interactions (Feldsine and Oliphant 1985). An observer in Maine notes hearing similar loud calls from nestlings begging for food, especially when they were almost old enough to fledge (Wells and Wells 2013).

On 3 August the Stewmans observed two Merlins in flight for several minutes. According to them, the birds were "almost flying in tandem" and were "quite acrobatic" (Stewman and Stewman, pers. comm., Oct. 14, 2020). Feldsine and Oliphant (1985)

describe many different flight patterns such as "high circling/soaring," "powerflying," and "rocking glide," which are characteristic of territorial displays, mating, or pair bonding activities. While there is a lack of literature addressing the timeline of adult courtship displays, it may be unlikely that these are pair bonding flights given the proximity to the end of the breeding season. Since the two birds are similar in size, lacking the obvious size difference of a male and female pair, they are more likely to be juveniles at play (Fig. 3). Regardless, the flight observed by the Stewmans differs from the powered, early-morning flights and soaring of migratory Merlins.

A single Merlin was also observed on 2, 5, 9, 11, 18 and 30 August. The bird was perched on the same snag almost every observation. Feldsine and Oliphant (1985) found that Merlins typically use tall trees as perches for guarding their nest sites. Since perching was not observed at the location throughout the summer, nest guarding does not seem very likely. However, the fact that this bird, assuming it is the same individual, remained in one area over the span of weeks seems inconsistent with migratory behavior.

Figure 3: Image of the Merlins performing the synchronized flight observed by the Stewmans.

There were several other sightings of Merlins in the same time frame by a birder, Alex Trifunovic, at Lees McRae College, Avery County, about 8 miles north of Land Harbor Lake. He observed 2 on 14 August, 1 calling on 15 August, and a group of 5 birds flying over on 1 September. Although the September sighting was within peak fall migration, it is possible that these individuals were associated with the same birds at Land Harbor Lake.

Discussion

One possible reason that there is a lengthy time period of no observations between 8 June and 1 August may be due in part to the nature of Merlin nesting behavior. They are very secretive, often nesting in dense conifers or deciduous trees in order to avoid predation (Fox 1964; Hodson 1976; Smith 1978; Sieg and Becker 1990). Incubation averages 30 days, and fledging occurs around Day 29, summing to approximately two

months before the young leave the nest (Cramp and Simmons 1980; Ruttledge 1985; Becker and Sieg 1985; Oliphant and Tessaro 1985; Palmer 1988). This could account for the two-month gap in observations. It is also possible that the lack of observations throughout the summer is because residents were vacationing and not consistently at their homes.

The nest, assuming breeding did occur, could have been located far enough away from Land Harbor Lake to render any obvious behaviors unnoticed during the summer. Males usually give the "ki-ki-kee" call when bringing food to an incubating female, yet no observations of calls were reported before August. The activity of the adults and young over these two months could have been overlooked if the birds were nesting in a secluded location in the surrounding area. Anecdotal accounts exist of "raucous calling" immediately pre- and post-fledging, which could account for the lack of observations of calling until later in the summer (Wells and Wells 2013). There is little other information regarding nestling and fledgling vocalizations during the post-fledging period. In fact, according to Birds of the World (Cornell 2020), there is no quantitative data about fledglings after they leave the nest. There is much more to be learned about fledgling behavior, family group behavior, and movements and dispersal, which may bring additional clarity to the sightings this summer (Warkentin et al. 2020).

Merlins are usually solitary outside of the breeding season and would not usually exhibit begging or courtship behaviors at other times (Sodhi et al. 1993). However, they have also been known to loosely migrate together and winter in pairs (Cramp and Simmons 1980; Cade 1982). Perhaps these birds were an early migrating group, but the interesting behavioral displays reported by the Stewmans, the timing of the sightings well within the known breeding period, and the lengthy period of time that Merlins were seen in the area, all suggest otherwise.

The lack of confirmable breeding evidence (i.e., nest, eggs, copulation, etc.) leads us only to speculate based on circumstantial observations. Age assessments of individual Merlins is likely not possible based on the limited number of photographs. However, these observations of Merlins in western North Carolina are certainly intriguing and merit further examination, especially in future breeding seasons.

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First Record of Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) in North Carolina

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On the evening of 22 December 2018, Steve Ritt located a Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) while sorting through a group of White-throated Sparrows (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) occupying a hedgerow between a gasoline station and Holly Ridge Golf Course at the intersection of Caratoke Highway and Edgewater Drive in Currituck County, NC. The bird was initially seen for a period of about ten minutes in fading light and relocated the next morning by Ritt and several other birders. Ritt states in the initial eBird report: "The first features that caught my attention, differing from the flock of White-throated Sparrows it was with, were the gray cheeks lacking an eyeline and the lack of contrast between the throat and upper breast. I then noticed that there were thin, blackish lateral throat stripes and no apparent malar or "moustachial" stripes. There was a yellowish wash to the front of the crown and lores broken by dark brownish lateral crown stripes. The flanks and general appearance of the bird was lighter and smoother than adjacent White-throated Sparrows, even in the fading evening light. The bill appeared dark".

Golden-crowned Sparrow, 31 Dec 2018, Currituck County, NC. Photo by Greg Hudson.

Ritt notes that the Golden-crowned Sparrow appeared slightly more skittish than the White-throated Sparrows with which it associated. The bird remained in an *Elaeagnus sp.* hedgerow and nearby wet, brushy mixed tree line through at least 14 February 2019.

After discovery, news of the birds' presence quickly spread throughout the birding community, and scores of observers were able to view the sparrow during a period of several weeks. This represents a first record of the species in North Carolina, and with acceptance of photos by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee, Golden-crowned Sparrow was added to the state's Definitive list of accepted species (Swick 2019).

Golden-crowned Sparrow is primarily a species of North America's Pacific coastal

states and provinces, with birds wintering from Baja California North to Washington and

breeding from British Columbia north to Alaska (Sibley 2000). Scattered records exist for birds wandering east from established nesting and wintering areas, with all states and provinces west of the Mississippi River, with the exception of Arkansas, having one or more reports. East of the Mississippi River, there are dozens of reports for states in the Midwest, Northeast and the Canadian Maritimes. The Southeast and Deep South have fewer reports, with one report each for Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky (eBird 2021). Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, West Virginia, Virginia, and Delaware have no reports (eBird 2021). The single South Carolina record dates to 22 December 1993, when Perry Nugent reported a bird from the Francis Marion National Forest on the Charleston Christmas Bird Count (Worthington 1995).

It appears that the pattern of vagrancy in the East favors a more northerly component, although the relative lack of sightings may be due to lack of coverage or other factors not related to the actual distribution of the species.

Golden-crowned Sparrow, 17 Jan 2019, Currituck County, NC. Photo by Pamela Ford.

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B. Everett Jordan Lake Bird Counts – Part Four

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Part 1 in this series of articles covered background information about the Jordan Lake bird counts and discussed the long-term data for several species of birds that are closely tied to the lake itself. Part 2 looked at the long-term data for one family of birds, the woodpeckers, while Part 3 discussed issues concerning species in decline. Here, in the final installment, we look at bird species that have been increasing.

The populations of several species we have been monitoring for 40 years in the Jordan Lake count circle have been increasing. Is this good news? Are more birds always better? This article examines the data for some of these species and tries to identify patterns that may help us understand what has been happening.

Introductions and Reintroductions

Humans tend to 'mess with Mother Nature,' as the saying goes. We introduce species to areas where they have never been before, and we re-introduce species to areas where they have been extirpated. We even introduce species for our own uses.

Figure 1. House Finch (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)

House Finches were originally birds of dry, open habitats in the southwestern part of the United States and Mexico. In 1939, a few individuals were released from a pet store in New York City (Badyaev et al. 2020). These birds bred, and by the mid-1940s, a small population became established on Long Island and surrounding areas. In the ensuing decades, House Finch populations expanded rapidly throughout the eastern half of the United States.

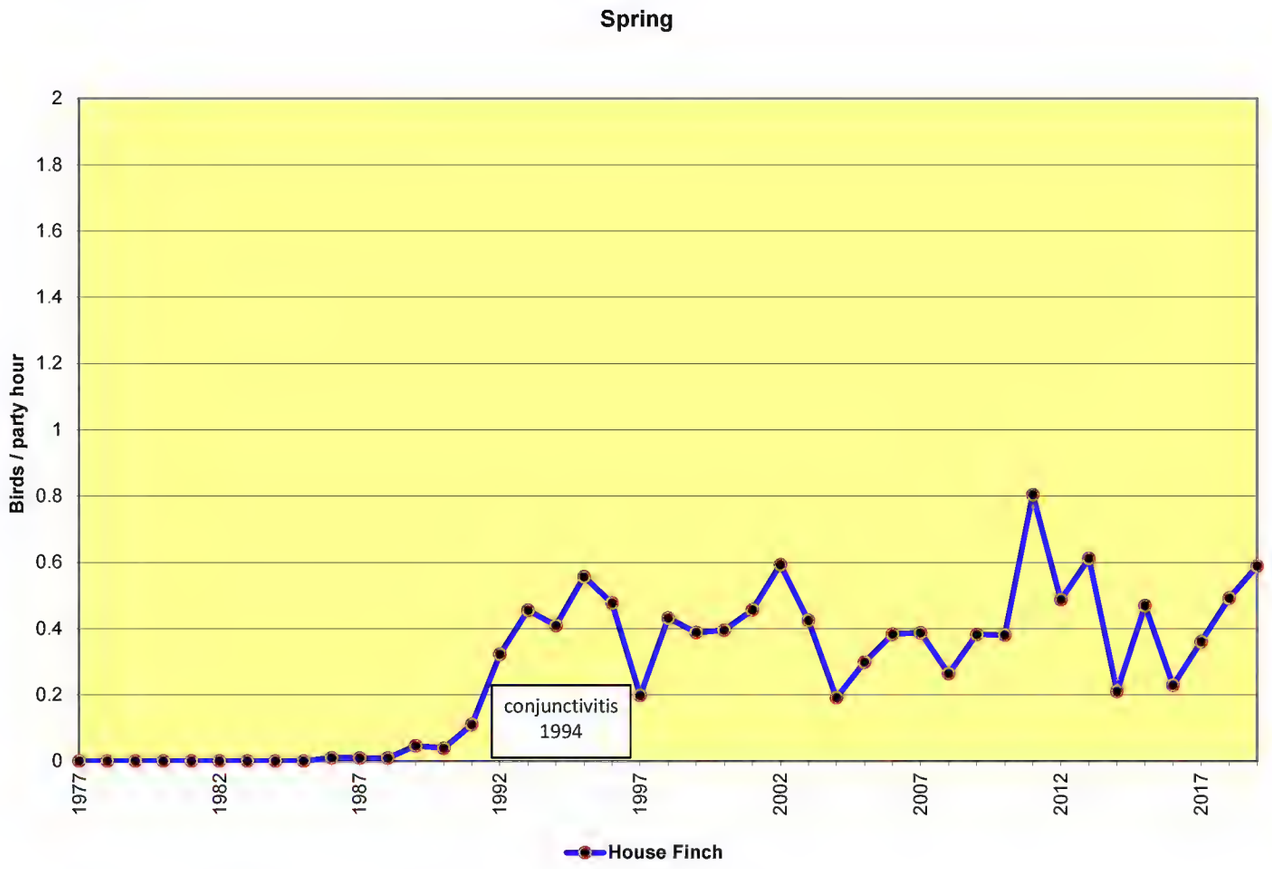

Figure 2. SBC, House Finch

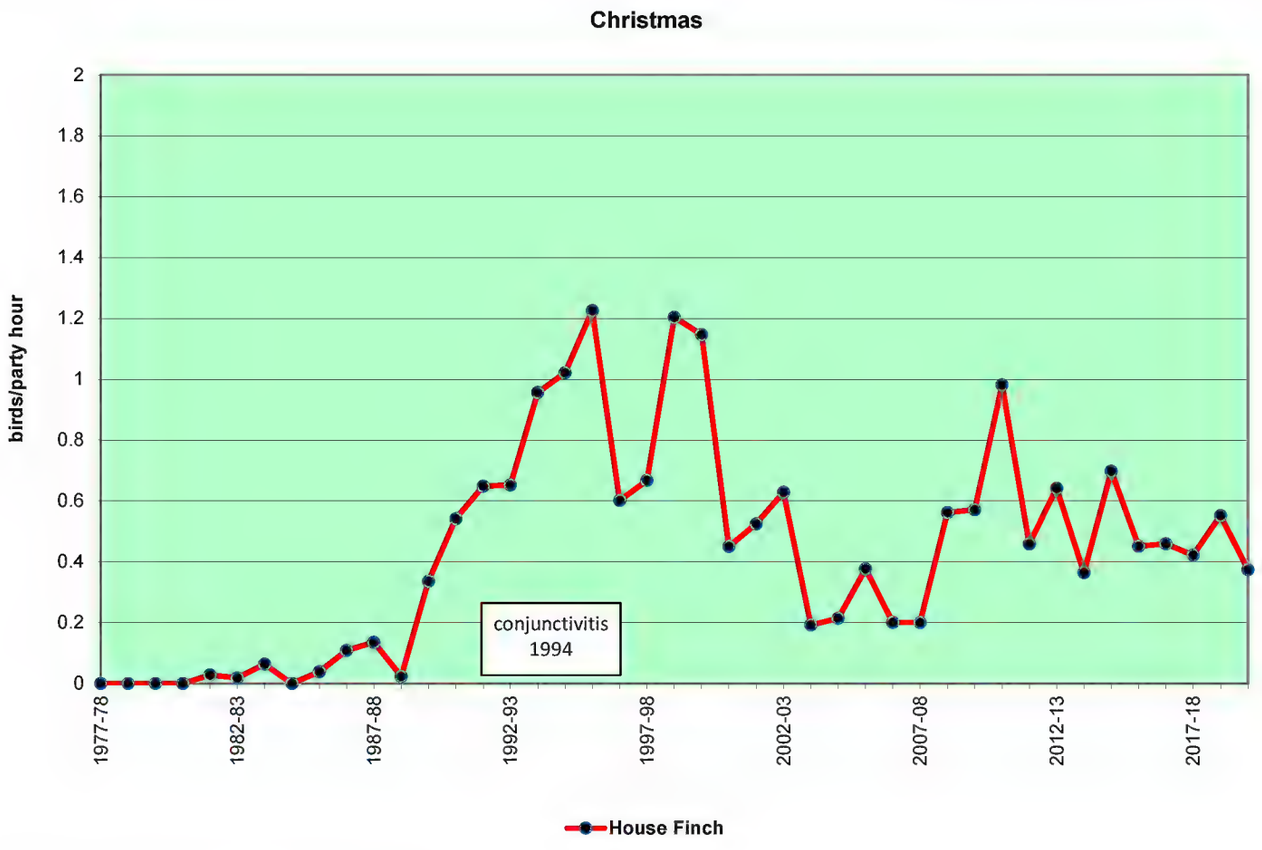

Figure 3. CBC, House Finch

Figures 2 and 3 show that House Finches were first recorded on our spring (SBC) and Christmas (CBC) bird counts in the mid-1980s. In 1994, an eye infection (conjunctivitis) appeared in House Finches in Washington, D.C. The disease may have spread from poultry, where it is common. This illness, often lethal in finches, soon spread throughout populations in the east, including North Carolina. As can be seen in Figure 2 and Figure 3, our local finch population declined in the mid-1990s and has fluctuated a bit ever since. The disease seems to take its toll most heavily in the winter. Our CBCs often show increases in these birds because of the addition of young birds from the previous breeding season. By spring, in stable populations, the numbers return to their usual levels. That seems to have happened with House Finches, so perhaps, they have developed some immunity to the disease over time.

Figure 4. Wild Turkey (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)

Wild Turkeys were found throughout North Carolina when Europeans first came to North America. However, in the 1800s, market hunting and deforestation decimated the turkey population; by the early 1900s their numbers dropped to near zero (McRoberts et al. 2020; North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission 2020). Restoration of turkeys began in the mid-1900s, and since 1953 more than 6000 birds have been released in North Carolina, mostly in the western part of the state and in counties along the Virginia border, but not in our immediate area. Statewide restoration efforts ended in 2005, about the time that we started seeing turkeys on our bird counts. The statewide population has increased from about 2000 birds in 1970 to more than 265,000 birds in 2015.

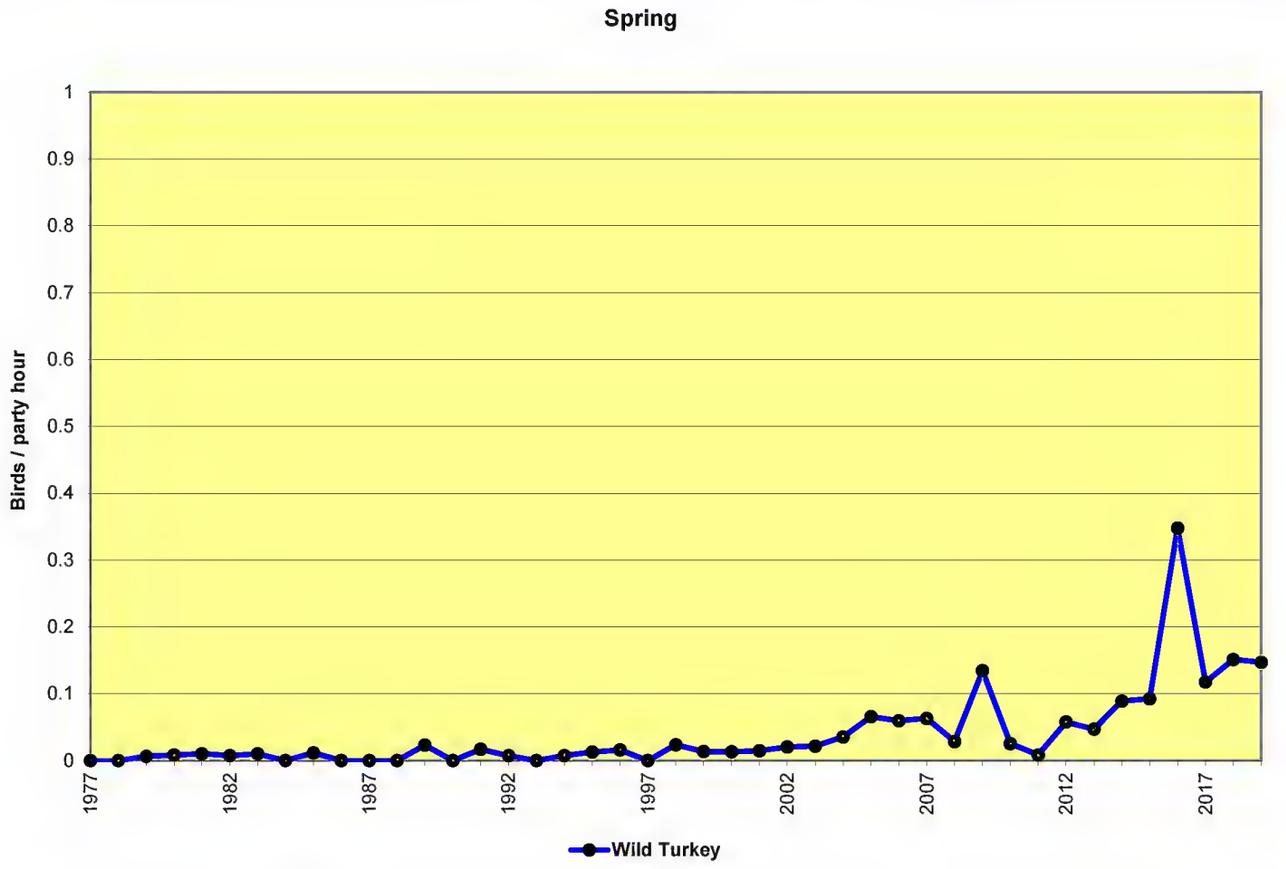

Figure 5. SBC, Wild Turkey

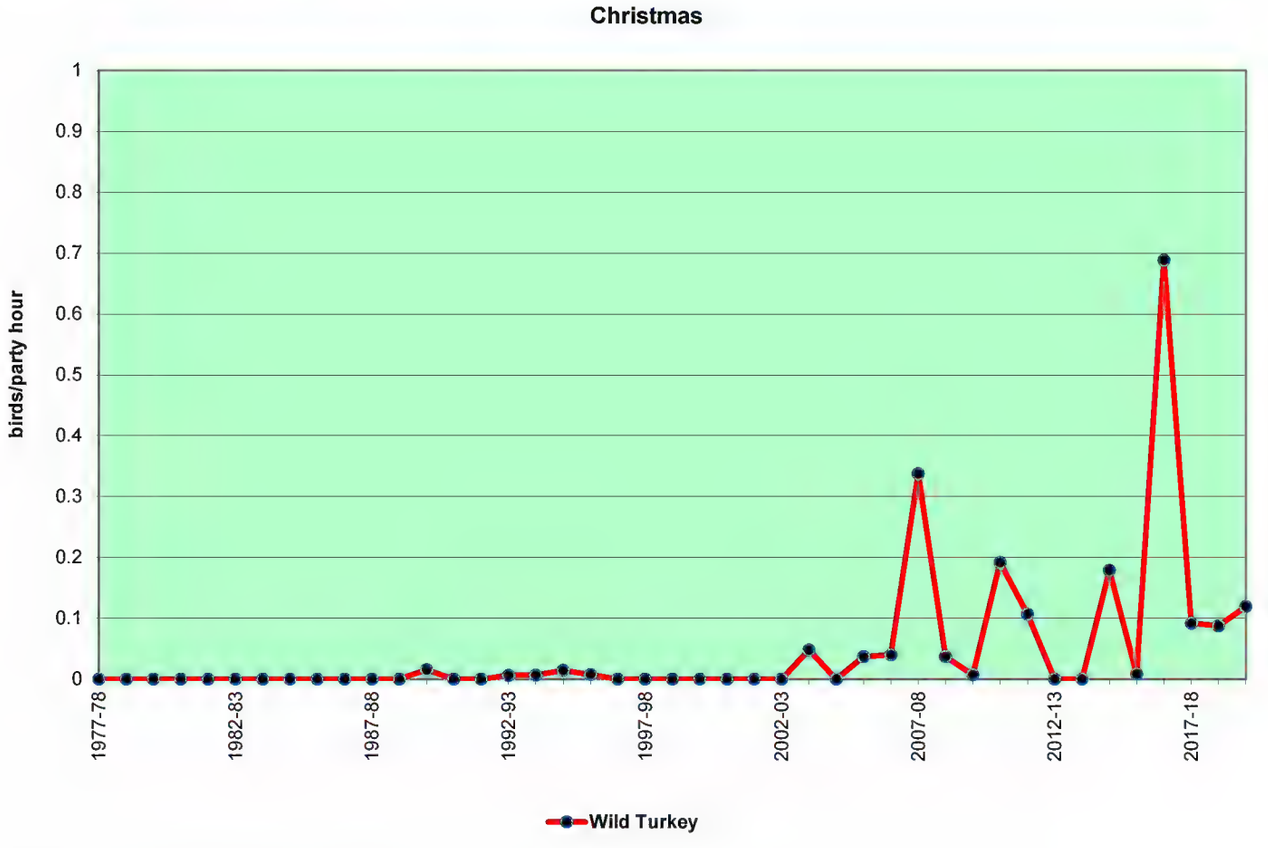

Figure 6. CBC, Wild Turkey

Figures 5 and 6 show that sightings of Wild Turkeys in the Jordan Lake Count Circle were rare until about 2005. Though they have not been seen in large numbers in any given year, they have been reported on almost every count in the past 10 years. These birds have probably spread from surrounding areas where they have been reintroduced. When turkeys forage in open habitats—grasslands or weedy fields—they can be relatively easy to see, because they are large. In forested habitats, they can be extremely difficult to see even at remarkably close range if they are quiet. If they do take flight to leave the scene, they do so with an extremely loud flapping of wings that will cause the human heart to beat dramatically and the accompanying adrenalin rush may take several minutes to subside.

Figure 7. Canada Goose (photograph, Vern Bothwell)

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Canada Geese in Piedmont North Carolina are more land birds than water birds. They are grazers, happily feeding on lawns and golf courses, and moving to water mostly for safety at night and during the breeding season. Such was not always the case. In the middle of the 1900s, Canada Geese were generally seen only in winter, when migratory birds returned south from their breeding grounds further north. But in the mid-1900s, geese were introduced (or reintroduced) in the midwestern and southern states. The genetics are murky, but it seems that many of the introduced birds came from sedentary, perhaps semi-domesticated populations. These birds, which do not migrate, found lots of amenable habitat with abundant resources. The result has been a population explosion. The sounds of a skein of geese flying overhead in October no longer indicate the return of wild birds from the far north. Those birds may just be your neighborhood geese, moving from one lawn to another.

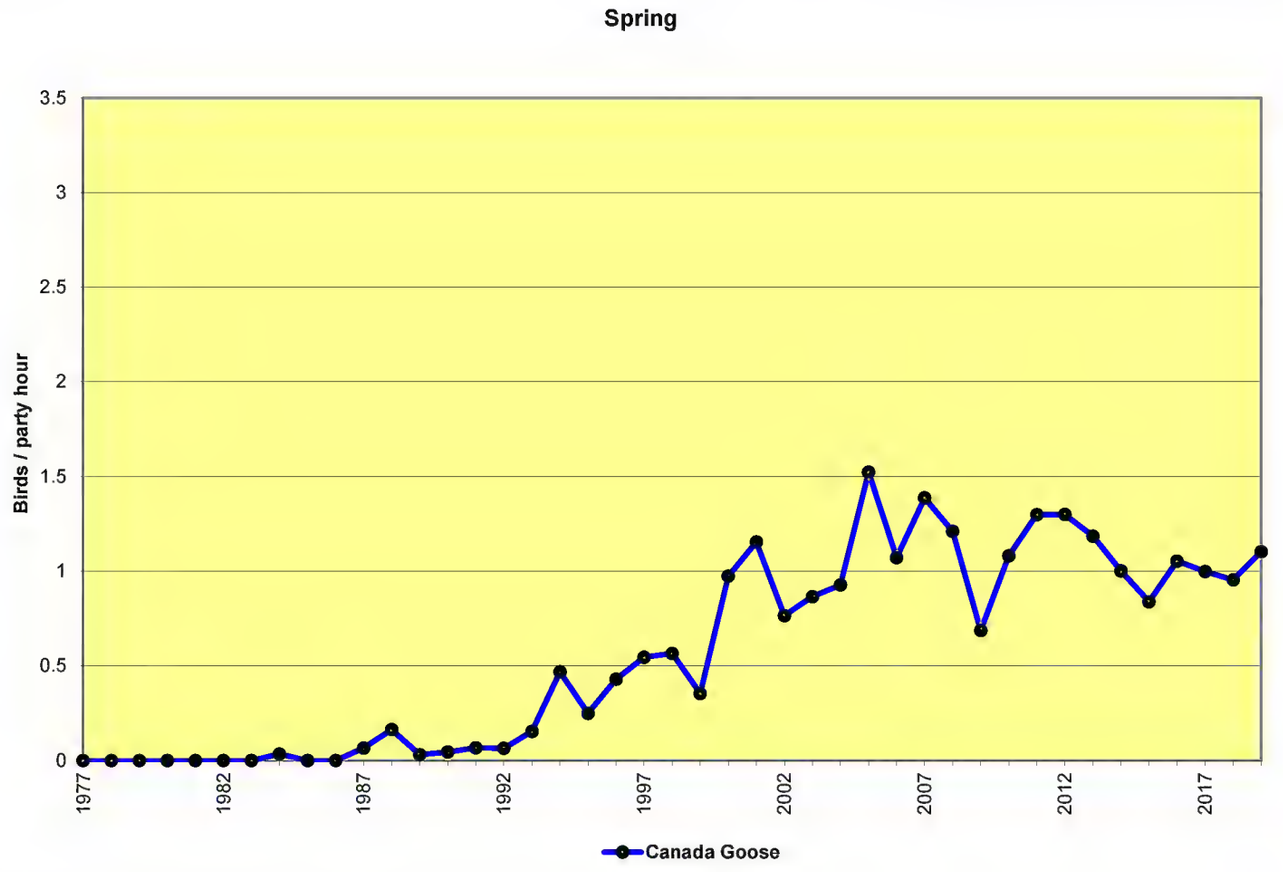

Figure 8. SBC, Canada Goose

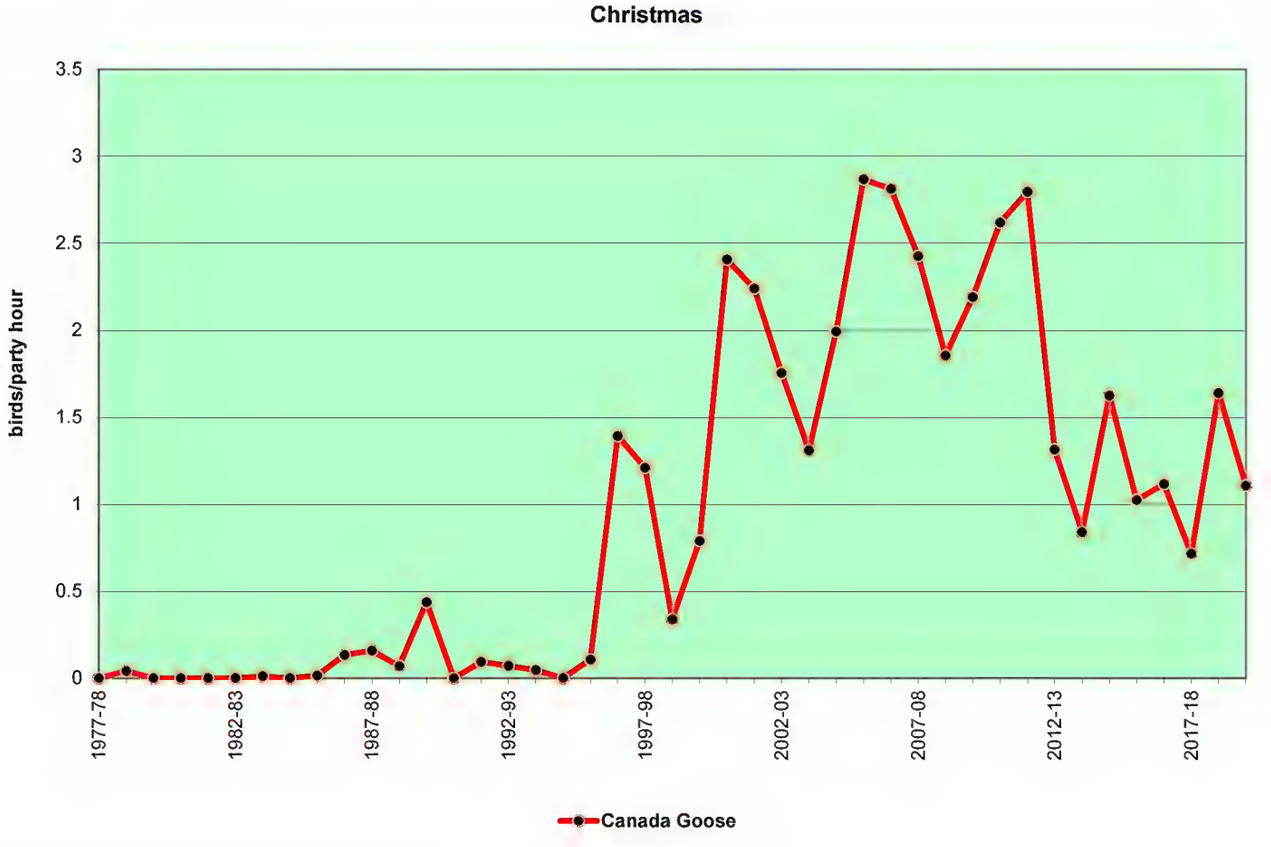

Figure 9. CBC, Canada Goose

Figures 8 and 9 show that Canada Geese began to appear in our count circle in significant numbers in the mid-1990s. A rapid increase in breeding birds (Fig. 8) may now be leveling off. The higher winter numbers (Fig. 9) probably reflect the young birds from the breeders of the previous spring. Adult geese are large, powerful birds with no real predators other than humans. They have thrived in our suburban areas where hunting is not allowed. If their numbers are leveling off, as our data indicate, perhaps they have reached the carrying capacity of our suburban resources. Bird counts over the next decade may help us to understand what is happening.

Range Expansions

Sometimes, species that were once uncommon in an area become more common as a result of range expansion from populations elsewhere. Following are some examples in our area. In each case, the species in question are compared to closely related species that were already present.

Figure 10. Turkey Vulture (photograph, Joe Donahue)

Figure 11. Black Vulture (photograph, Vern Bothwell)

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)
Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)

These two vulture species are closely related, but they have some interesting differences that are significant. Both species eat mostly carrion. Turkey Vultures find their food by soaring overhead and using visual and olfactory cues to detect carcasses. Unlike most bird species, Turkey Vultures have a very well-developed sense of smell (Buckley 2020). They have been caught in concealed traps that were baited only with scent, and they often approached those traps from a downwind direction. Black Vultures, on the other hand, hunt by sight. They find food visually; however, they also watch Turkey Vultures and will move in aggressively and take over a carcass the Turkey Vultures have found.

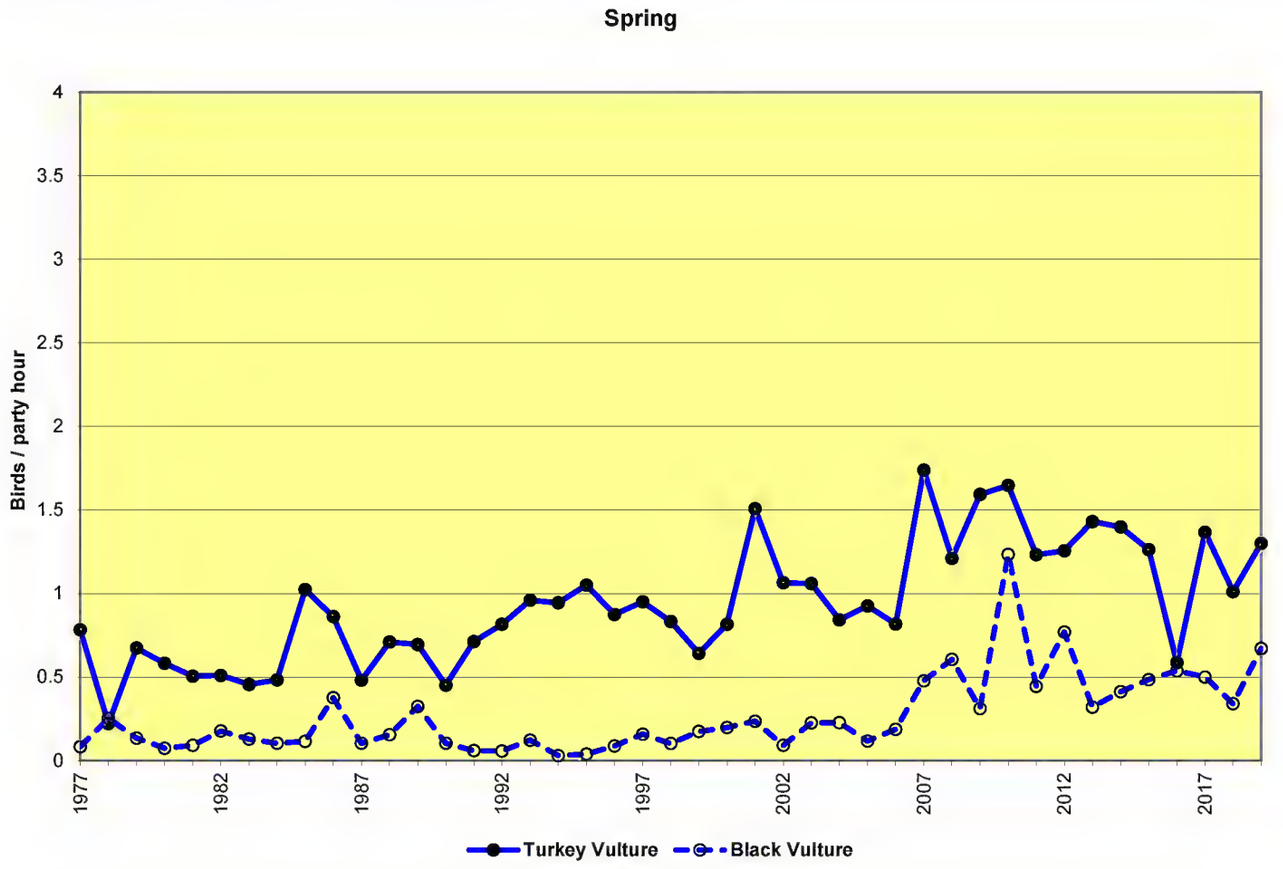

Figure 12. SBC, Turkey Vulture and Black Vulture

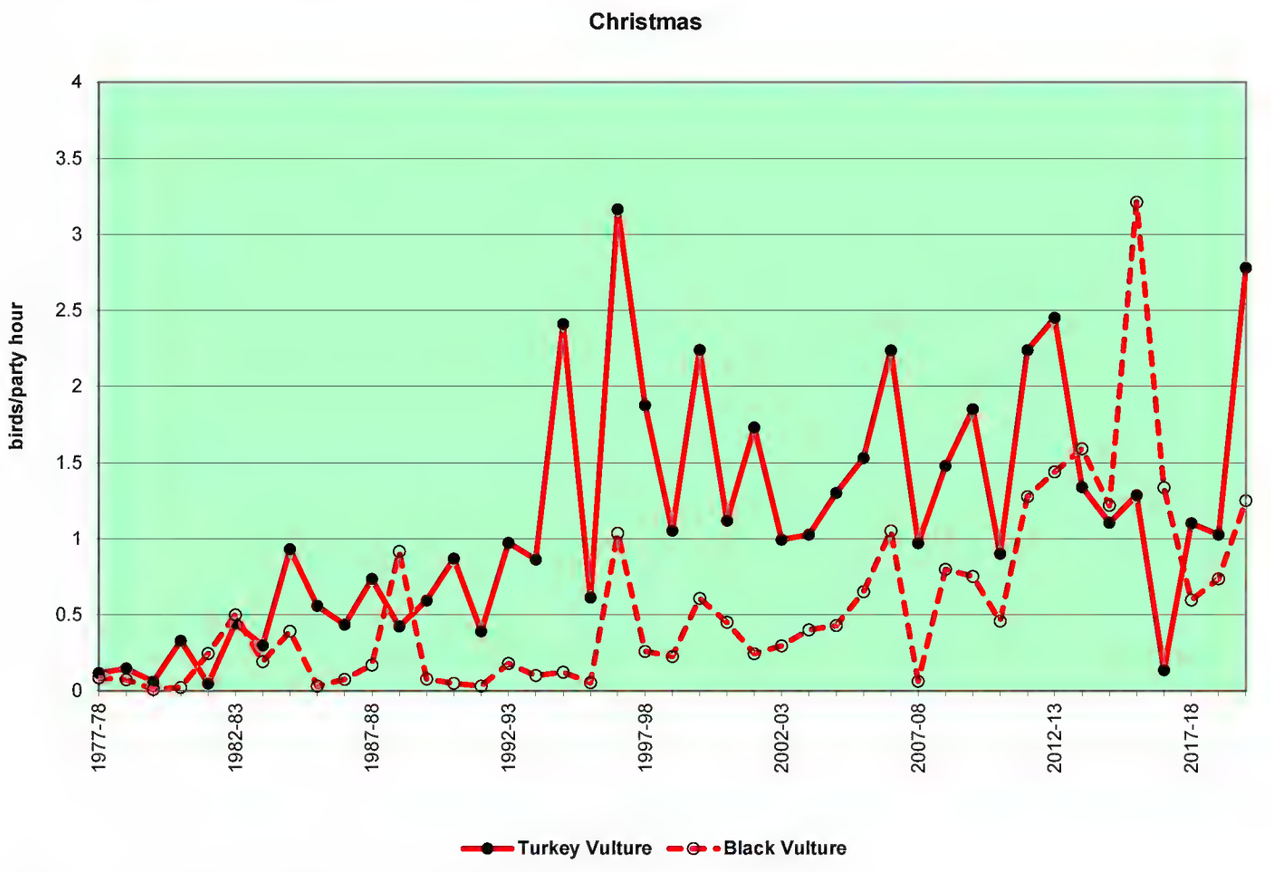

Figure 13. CBC, Turkey Vulture and Black Vulture

Finding vultures on our counts can be a hit or miss operation. They do not usually start flying until well after the sun has come up and begins heating the land surface, creating thermals for the vultures to use to get a free ride up to soaring/foraging altitude. In rainy weather they may not fly at all. On the other hand, they often roost communally, sometimes both species together. The result can be seen in the large fluctuations in the data from year to year, especially in winter (Figs. 12 and 13). The graphs show that both Turkey Vultures and Black Vultures have been on the increase over the decades, and that Turkeys have almost always outnumbered Blacks. However, it appears that Blacks may be increasing faster in recent years while the population growth of Turkeys may have leveled off.

Both vulture species are year-round residents throughout South America and southern North America, and both are somewhat migratory. Some individuals reside in our area year-round, while others, particularly Turkey Vultures, migrate north to breed, returning in the winter months (Buckley 2020; Kirk et al. 2020). Black Vultures do not move quite as much, and they have not extended their range as far north as Turkey Vultures. The observed range expansion and increase in numbers are probably influenced by human activities such as the creation of large landfill sites and increases in road kills resulting from increased development of roads and highways.

Figure 14. American Crow (photograph, Brendan Klick)

Figure 15. Fish Crow (photograph, Brendan Klick)

American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)
Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*)

These two species of crows are almost indistinguishable, except by voice. Fish Crows are a bit smaller, but this is not a reliable field mark. The relative lengths of two of their primaries are characteristic. The labels added to Brendan Klick's excellent photographs above show that P9 is about the same length as P5 in American Crows, while P9 is longer than P5 in Fish Crows. Of course, observing these feathers on a flying bird in the field is all but impossible.

On the other hand, in spring, when both species are vocal, they can be relatively easy to identify, if they call. The drawn out "caw" of an American Crow is quite different from the shorter "uh uh" or "car car" of a Fish Crow. However, juvenile American Crows can sound just like Fish Crows, so summer identification can be trickier. And in winter, when both species tend to be much less vocal, it can be impossible to tell them apart in the field.

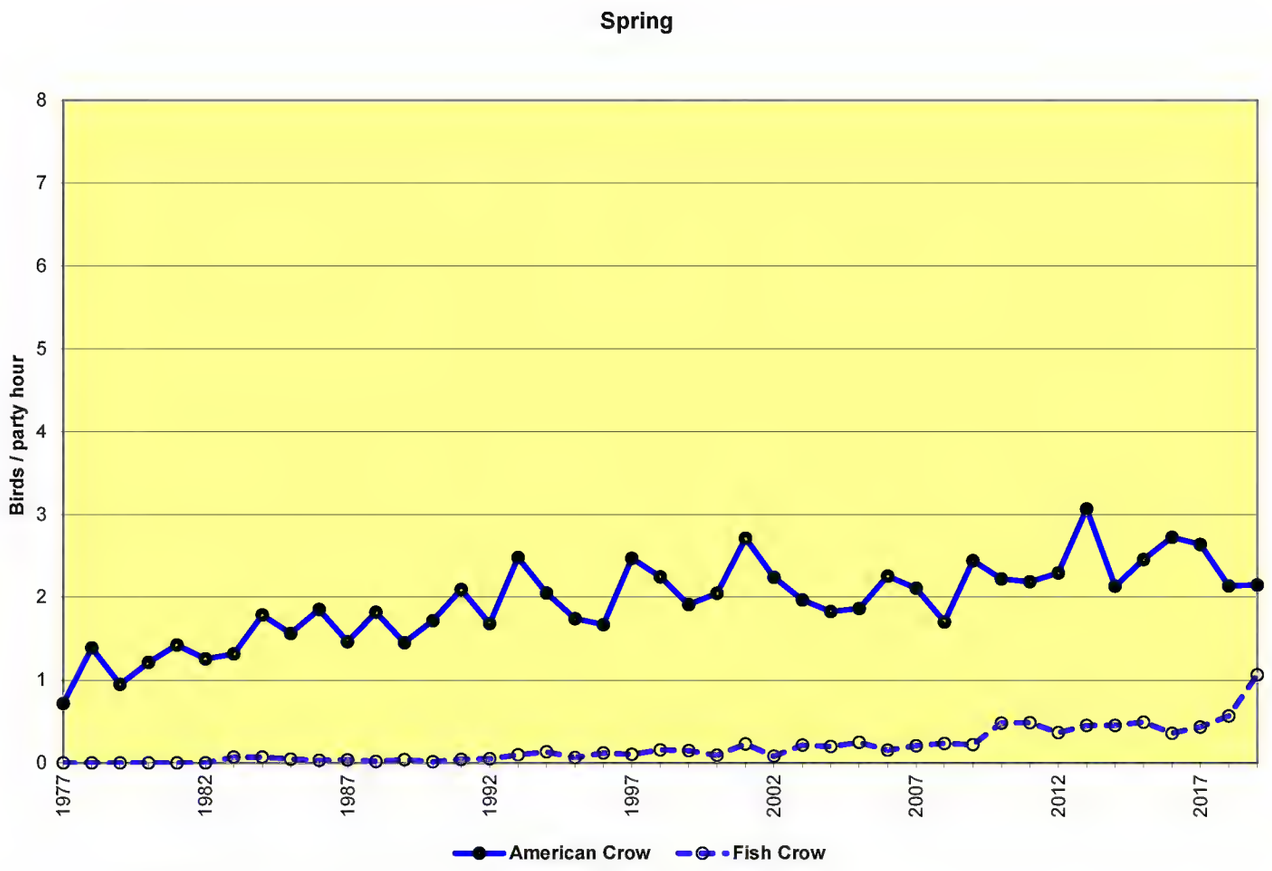

Figure 16. SBC, American Crow and Fish Crow

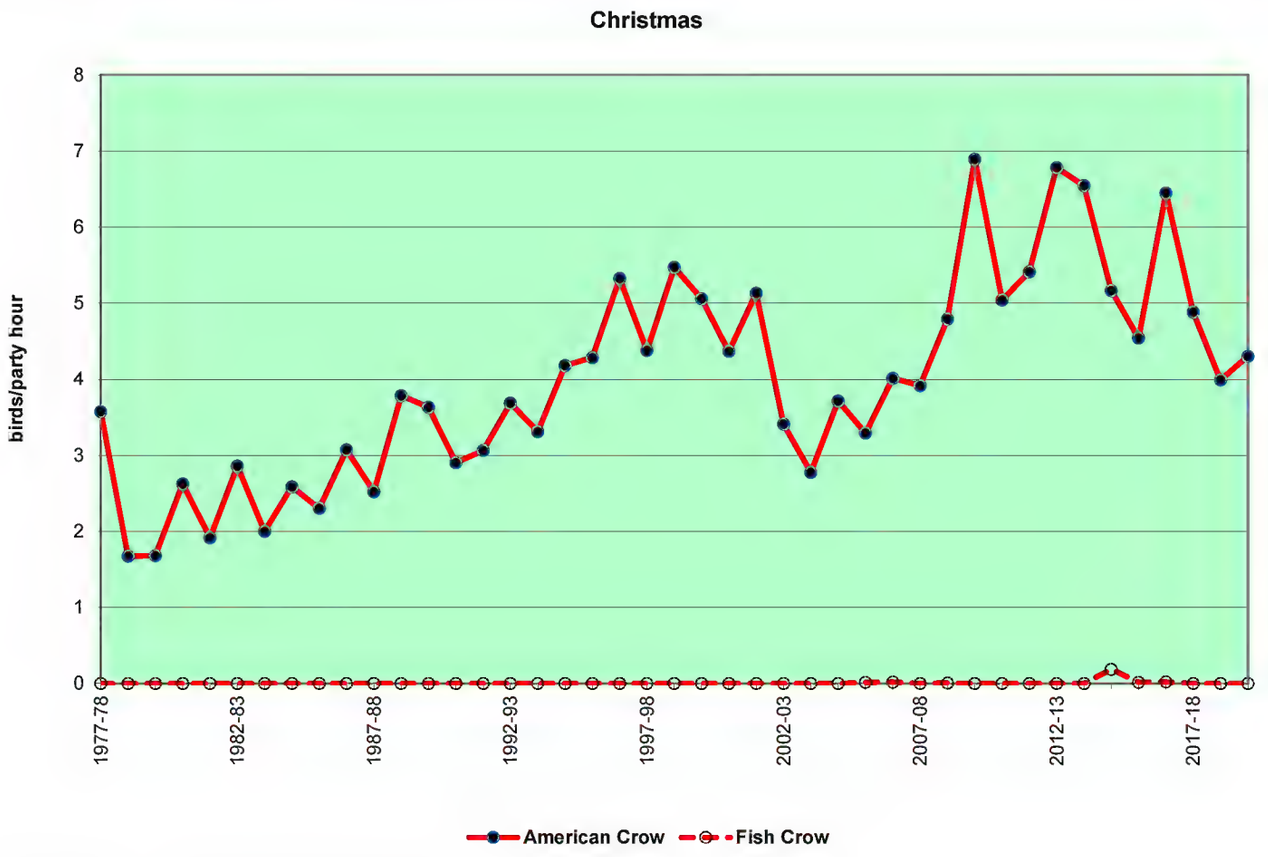

Figure 17. CBC, American Crow and Fish Crow

Figures 16 and 17 show that American Crows have been increasing slowly but steadily for the past four decades. Fish Crows were rare during this period until the early 2000s, when they became more regular in the spring and summer months, though they are far outnumbered by American Crows. Prior to the 2000s, Fish Crows in North Carolina were considered to be a coastal or tidewater species. As Figure 17 shows, they have been all but absent in the Piedmont when we do our CBCs, probably withdrawing east, back toward the coast in December and January. However, it is possible that they have simply not been counted if they have been silent. In general, when a crow is seen but not heard, it is counted as an American Crow—the *default* crow. This could bias our data to some degree.

It is difficult to speculate with any certainty why these species have been increasing. Both species tolerate and even take advantage of human population centers. Both species readily forage at landfills and parking lots of fast-food restaurants. And Fish Crows may be attracted to the large reservoirs humans have created in the area (Jordan and Falls Lakes).

Human 'Habitats'

Several species in our area seem to respond well to the alterations humans have made to the environment. Residential areas with trees and lawns, ornamental plantings, bird feeders, water features, and nest boxes are all attractive to some species at the expense of others that require larger forest tracts, shrubby second growth, or extensive grasslands. Red-bellied Woodpeckers, as discussed in Part 2 of these articles, is a typical example. The species discussed below also seem to fit this pattern.

Figure 18. Carolina Chickadee (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Figure 19. Tufted Titmouse (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Carolina Chickadee (*Poecile carolinensis*)

Tufted Titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*)

Chickadees and titmice are "leaders of the pack." In the Piedmont region of North Carolina, they are non-migratory, year-round, permanent residents. In the spring, they pair up to lay eggs and raise young, but by mid-summer they congregate in small, multi-species flocks and move around their home range in search of resources. Other species join these roving bands, especially in winter—for example, White-breasted Nuthatches, Downy Woodpeckers, Brown Creepers, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets. Chickadees and titmice seem to explore every nook and cranny in the natural environment—searching under leaves, probing into tree bark crevices, poking into dead flower stalks—but also in human constructions—searching under eaves, probing into siding, poking into forgotten laundry on a clothes line. And of course, when humans put up bird feeders, chickadees and titmice are usually the first species to find them.

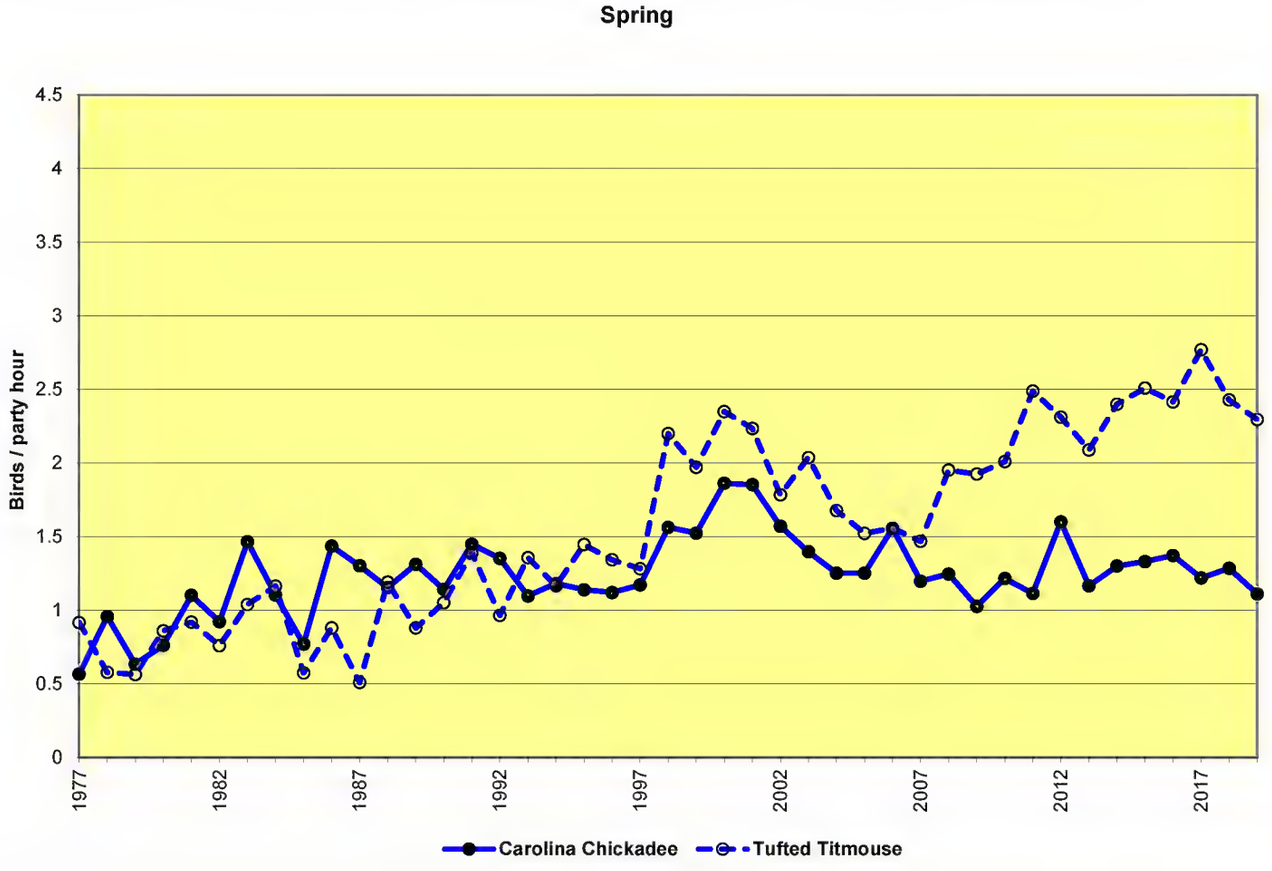

Figure 20. SBC, Carolina Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse

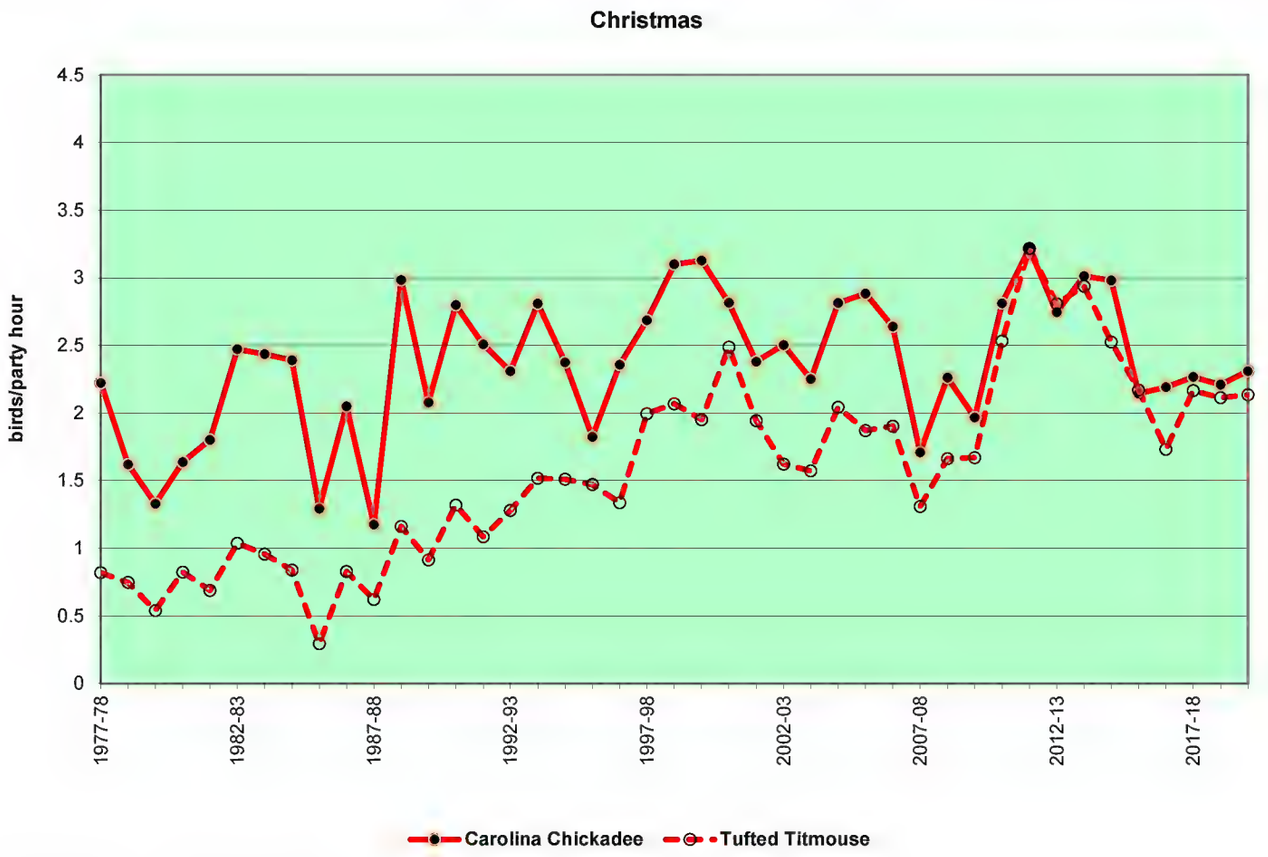

Figure 21. CBC, Carolina Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse

Figures 20 and 21 show that the populations of both species are increasing in the Jordan Lake bird count circle. This growth parallels the increase in numbers and the expansion in range of humans in this area. Parks and campgrounds, residential communities, and small commercial zones all create habitats that provide resources these birds need. These graphs indicate that while the populations of both species are increasing, titmice numbers seem to be growing faster than chickadee numbers. In winter (Fig. 21, CBC), chickadees almost always outnumber titmice in any given year, but titmice are clearly gaining. In spring (Fig. 20, SBC), chickadees were more common until the 1990s, when titmice took the lead and have outnumbered chickadees ever since.

The following speculations by the author are just that—speculations, not definitive explanations. The intent is to pique interest and perhaps experimentation and further analysis by others. Two questions to consider: 1) Overall, why are titmice increasing more rapidly than chickadees? 2) What happens over the course of a year such that the number advantage of chickadees in December becomes a number advantage for titmice by May?

- Regarding the first question, changes in land use patterns by humans could be affecting the two species differently. Chickadees and titmice may differ in certain subtle ways in terms of food preferences, nest site selection, interactions with other bird species, and so forth. Any or all of these differences could be influenced by changes wrought by humans. The number of people living in the Triangle area (Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill) has increased dramatically

during these four decades. Growing numbers of housing developments and shopping malls, development of industrial parks, and decrease of natural areas are all factors that might affect these two species differently.

- Regarding the second question, it could be that the relative numbers recorded is an artifact of the techniques used by the counters. Chickadees and titmice may breed at different times. For example, during the spring count period (the first week in May), if chickadees breed earlier, they may be incubating eggs and singing and moving about less conspicuously, while titmice may be singing vociferously, establishing territories and attracting mates.

- Climate change since the early 1990s may have reached a threshold that influenced the winter hardiness of one or the other or both of these species. For example, perhaps titmice are more subject to winter kill than chickadees at certain temperatures. If winters are now milder, this might allow for greater relative survival of titmice and therefore larger numbers reported in the spring.
- Or the opposite could be true. Milder winters might have a negative impact on chickadees, making them more susceptible to certain diseases that decrease their numbers.

- If there is an advance in breeding dates due to climate change, this might affect which species is singing when and therefore affect the 'apparent' numbers of individuals and subsequently their reported numbers.

Figure 22. Brown-headed Nuthatch (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Figure 23. White-breasted Nuthatch (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*)
White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*)

Though closely related, these two species have strong preferences for quite different habitats. Brown-headed Nuthatches are birds of mature pine forests (Slater et al. 2020). Throughout its range in southeastern North America, this nuthatch is always associated with pines, though the species of pine varies, depending on local conditions. In our area, the most common species is Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*). Loblolly stands are regularly managed—clear cut, reseeded, allowed to mature, and then clear cut again. Loblollies can grow to 50 feet tall in just 20 years, so depending on how they will be used (wood pulp or lumber), the harvesting cycle may be just a few decades long.

White-breasted Nuthatches prefer mature deciduous forests or mixed deciduous/conifer forests (Grubb Jr. 2020). These forests take longer to develop and are typically less common in our area. Perhaps this is why White-breasted Nuthatches are less common in our area than Brown-headed Nuthatches.

About a decade ago, Audubon North Carolina began a program to install 10,000 nest boxes specifically for Brown-headed Nuthatches (Audubon North Carolina 2020). These nuthatches typically excavate holes in dead snags or use holes made by woodpeckers. Audubon NC became concerned that climate change and human activities could potentially threaten these birds.

Figure 24 shows that the populations of both species are increasing. It is difficult to speculate about how the interplay among forest growth and harvesting, human incursions into their habitats, and the Audubon NC program might be affecting these species.

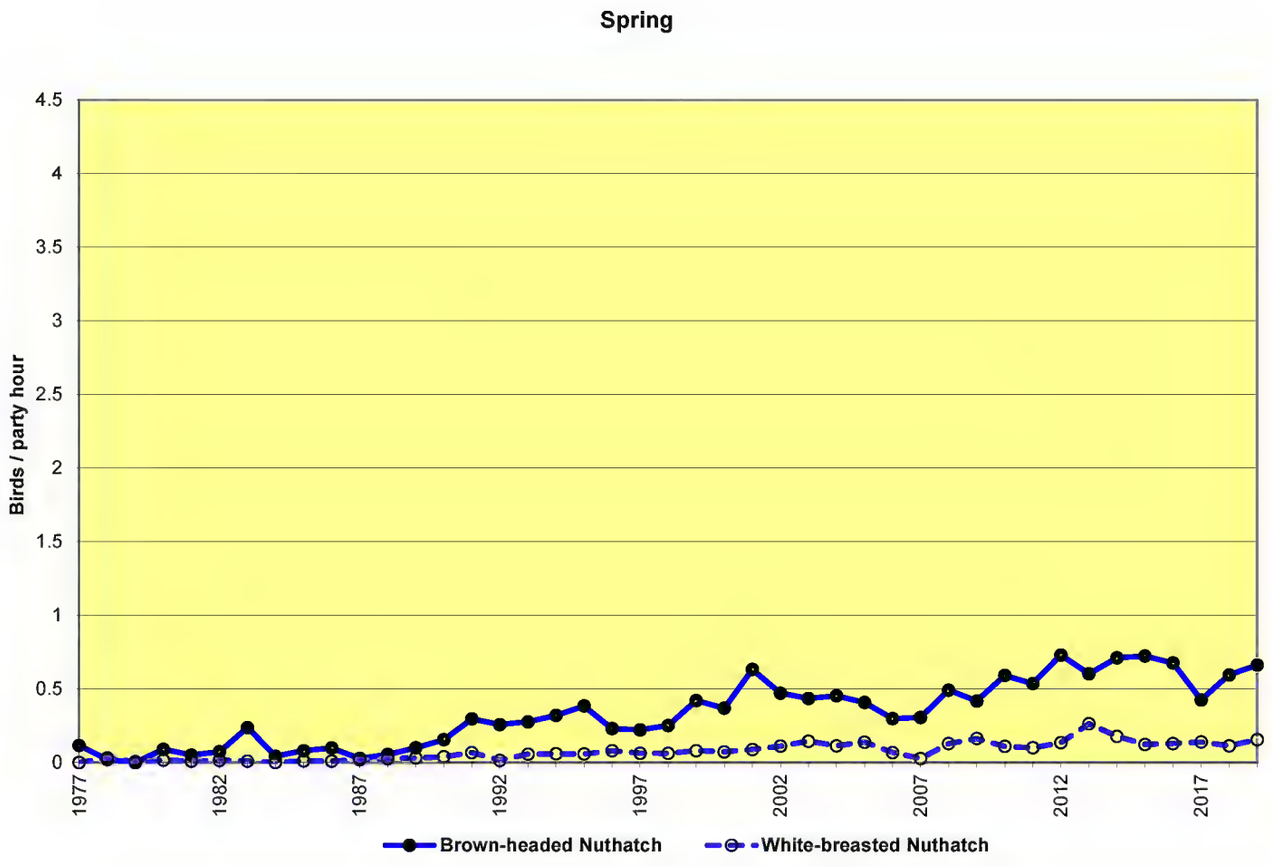

Figure 24. SBC, Brown-headed Nuthatch and White-breasted Nuthatch

Other Species

The alterations humans have made to the environment may be influencing population increases in other species as well. The following spring count (SBC) graphs show the data for several of these species. The Christmas count (CBC) graphs would be similar. I will let the graphs speak for themselves, rather than restate the factors listed above in the introduction to this section. All these graphs use the same vertical scale of 0 to 4.5 birds/party hour (the same as for the chickadee and titmouse and nuthatch graphs) to show their abundance relative to each other.

Figure 25. Carolina Wren (*Thryothurus ludovicianus*) (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

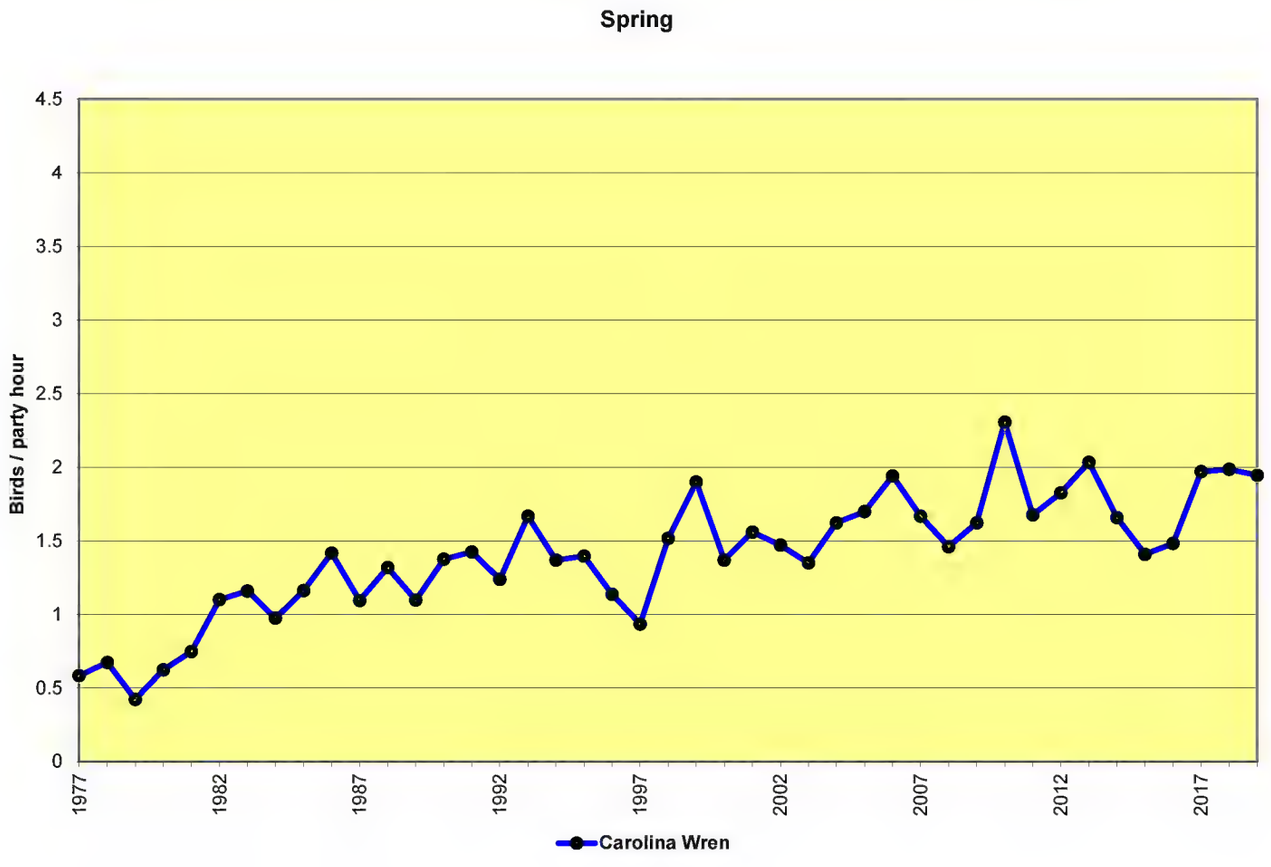

Figure 26. SBC, Carolina Wren

Figure 27. Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) (photograph, Bill Majoros)

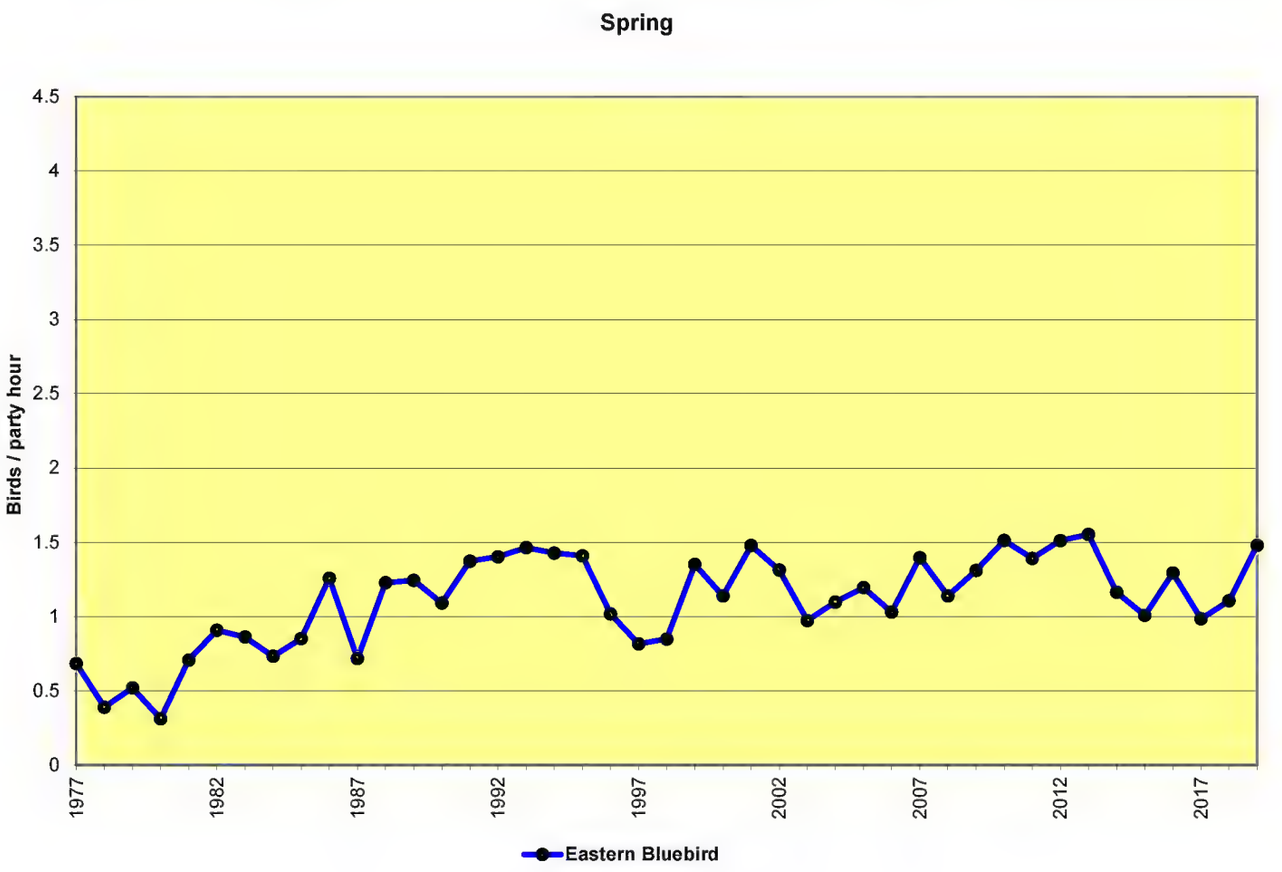

Figure 28. SBC, Eastern Bluebird

Figure 29. Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

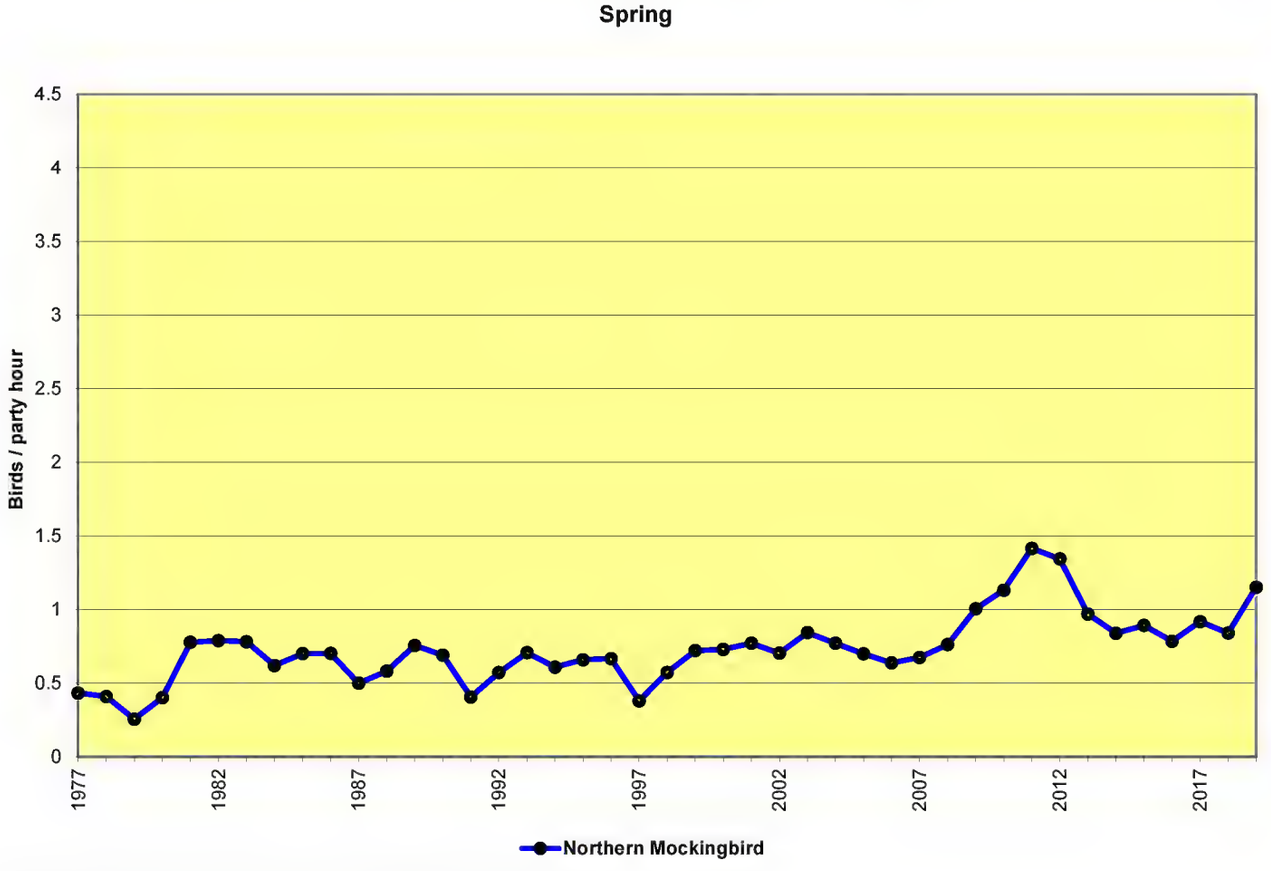

Figure 30. SBC, Northern Mockingbird

Figure 31. Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerine*) (photograph, Norm Budnitz)

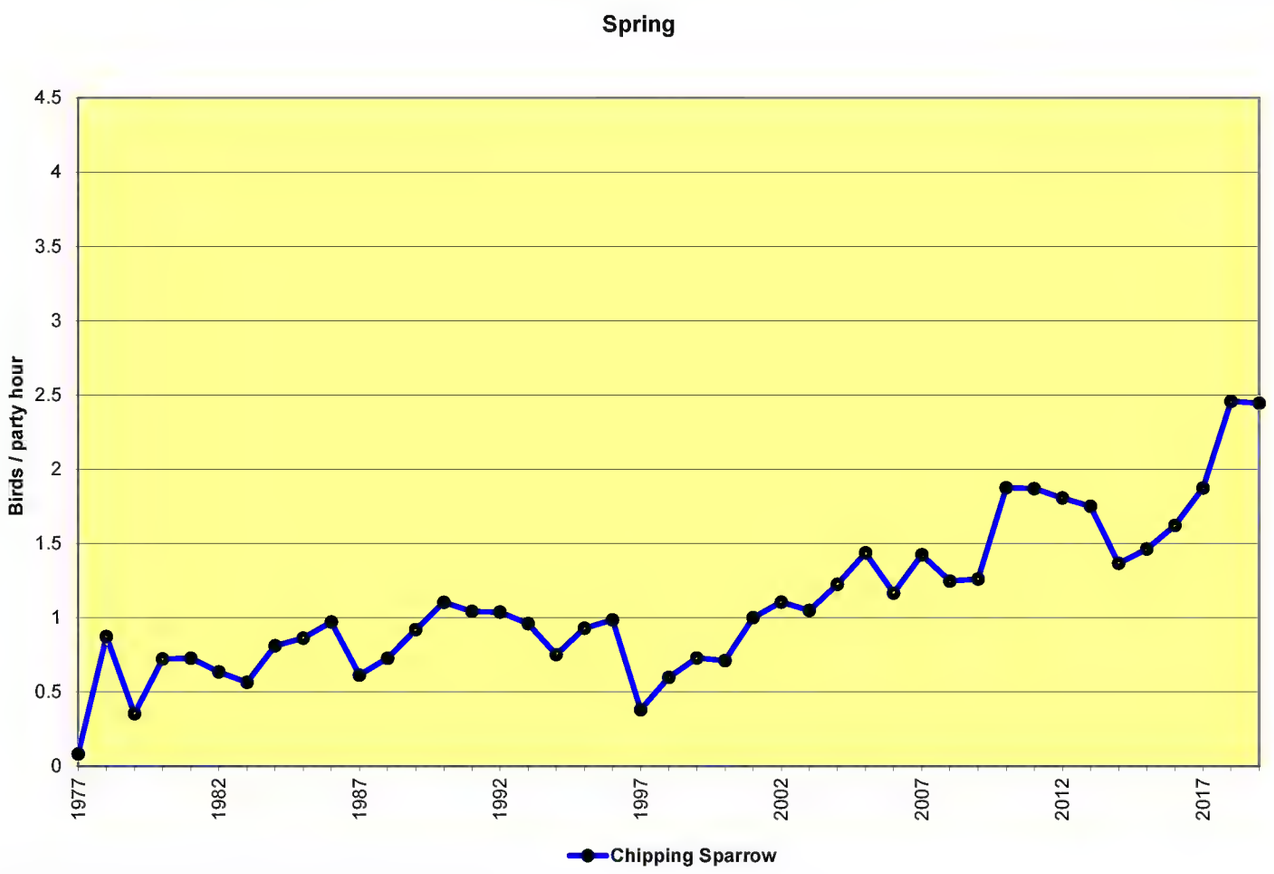

Figure 32. SBC, Chipping Sparrow

Figure 33. Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) (photograph, Tom Driscoll)

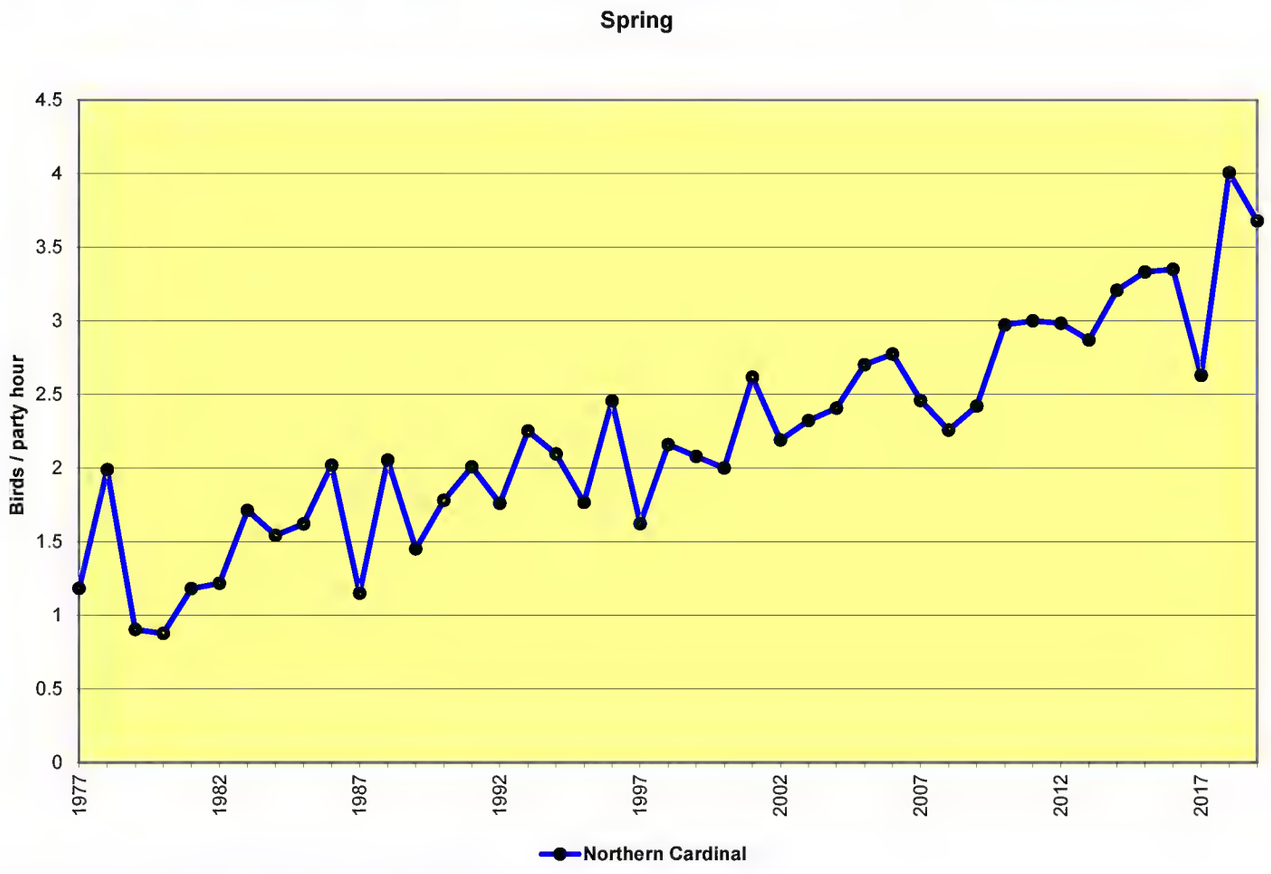

Figure 34. SBC, Northern Cardinal

Discussion

The species mentioned in this article all show signs of increasing population sizes in Piedmont North Carolina. And these increases have all been mediated in one way or another by human activities—introduction or reintroduction by humans, global warming, and extensive increases in residential and commercial areas. In fact, this can be said for the birds mentioned in all four of these articles. While increases in some species are aided by these human activities, decreases in others appear to be the result of these same activities. The 40-plus years of data we have gathered, and will continue to gather, should help us understand these long-term changes.

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BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Spring 2021, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	*December 1–February 28*	*due March 20*
Spring	*March 1–May 31*	*due June 20*
Summer	*June 1–July 31*	*due August 20*
Fall	*August 1–November 30*	*due December 20*

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location),and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **Dr** – Drive, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **Ln** – Lane, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

All italicized place names are counties.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: The high count this spring was 62 at Eagle's Point Golf Club *Beaufort* SC 14 Apr (Steve Salisbury, et al.). Sightings made in NC, rare but increasing, included two in Vander *Cumberland* NC 9-16 May (Yvonne Porter, m. obs.), five at Porters Neck Country Club *New Hanover* NC 23-28 May (m. obs.), and five at Carolina Beach Lake *New Hanover* NC 25 May (Jamie Adams, m. obs.).

Greater White-fronted Goose: One at Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 10 Apr through 3 May (Steve Barlow, m. obs.) was somewhat late.

Tundra Swan: Two seemingly healthy adults at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Washington* NC 20 May (Greg Hudson) were rather late.

Cinnamon Teal: Two, a drake and a hen, seen on the pond next to Ramp 43 at Cape Point *Dare* NC 31 May (m. obs.) were amazing finds. This sighting was not only the first of more than a single bird in the Carolinas but also the latest ever made in spring.

American Wigeon: A drake at Dobbin Farms *Anderson* SC 29-30 May (Cindy Groff, m. obs.) was rather late.

Mottled Duck: Two along the Basin Trail at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 21 May into June (Dave Hart, m. obs.) were unusual for NC.

Common Eider: Several notable counts were made in *Carteret* NC—18 at Beaufort Inlet 8 Mar (Randy Newman), nine on the Morehead City waterfront 27 Apr (John Fussell, et al.), and likely the same nine birds at Beaufort Inlet 15 May (Michael Cheves). The latter count was especially high for mid-May. Individuals lingered into late May and June at several sites along the coast.

Surf Scoter: One on Oak Hollow Lake *Guilford* NC 5 Apr was the only inland sighting reported this spring.

White-winged Scoter: A hen on Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 3 Mar (Ann Stinely, m. obs.) was the likely the same individual seen later that same day on Lake Lynn *Wake* NC (Trenton Voytko, m. obs.).

Long-tailed Duck: Individuals on Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 2 Mar (Kevin Markham, Marc Ribaudo, m. obs.) and on Lake Marion *Calhoun* SC 17 Mar (Gus & Susan Moody) were unusual for sites away from the coast.

Common Merganser: This species continues to increase as a breeder along rivers in the NC mountains. Breeding was confirmed again along the Tuckasegee River in *Swain* NC when a hen was seen with at least four chicks 28 Apr (Simon Thompson). Suggestive of possible breeding in the NC mountains were drake/hen pairs on the Tuckasegee River in *Jackson* 11 Mar (Jeremy Hyman) through 15 Apr (Blake Ledbetter), on the French Broad River in *Buncombe* 11 Mar (Bob Butler), on the Mitchell River in *Surry* 12 Mar (G. Patton), on the Swannanoa River in *Buncombe* 12-20 Mar (Casey Girard), on the Pigeon

River in *Haywood* 13 Mar (Nikhil & Vim Reddy), on Cane River in *Yancey* 13-23 Mar (Robin Tingley, m. obs.), and on the Little River in *Alleghany* 2 May (Patsy Bailey). Three, one drake and two hens, on the Ararat River in *Surry* 26 Apr (Ann Newsome) and, possibly the same three birds, on W. Kerr Scott Reservoir *Wilkes* 2 May (Guy McGrane, Maxwell Ramey) were unusual for the NC foothills in late spring. A hen photographed at Howell Woods *Johnston* NC 18 Apr (Rob Rybczynski) was a first for that county.

Red-necked Grebe: One near the dam on Lake Tillery *Montgomery* and *Stanly* NC (Baxter Beamer, Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.) 7-13 Mar was the only one reported this period.

Eared Grebe: Two were seen around Cape Point *Dare* NC 2 Mar (Daniel Irons) through 10 Mar (Andrew Thornton). The individual that wintered on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC was last seen 25 Mar (Rebekkah LaBlue).

White-winged Dove: Individuals were seen at five sites along or near the coast from 15 Apr through 30 May.

Black-billed Cuckoo: Pairs of singing birds at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 9 May (John Fussell, et al.) and at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 29 May (Christian Hawn, et al.) were suggestive of attempted breeding at those sites.

Rufous Hummingbird: An adult female visiting a feeder in Asheville *Buncombe* NC 10-22 Mar (Simon Thompson, m. obs.) was unusual for the mountain region in spring.

Common Gallinule: One photographed on Arrowhead Pond at Pee Dee NWR *Anson* NC 3 Apr (Mike Conway) and 5 Apr (Ann Stinely) was unusual for that part of the state.

Limpkin: The pair seen in the Island Green community in southern *Horry* SC beginning in January apparently bred at that site, as an adult was photographed alongside seven chicks 28 May (Dawne Dutton). Nesting in SC was first confirmed only a year ago. One in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 18 Apr through 10 May (Nick Tepper, m. obs.) was unusual for that site.

American Golden-Plover: Two were seen along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 27 Mar (Todd Arcos, Wayne Forsythe, m. obs.) and one was seen there 2-12 Apr and 3-5 May (m. obs.). Individuals were seen at six sites along the southern half of our coast 19 Apr through 13 May (m. obs.).

Upland Sandpiper: Spring sightings included one at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 27 Mar (m. obs.) and 6-7 Apr (Jay Wherley, Simon Thompson, m. obs.), one along Zion Church Rd in *Union* NC 8 Apr (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.), one along Friendship Church Rd in *Guilford* NC 24 Apr (Roberta Newton, Ann Van Sant, m. obs.), two along Willoughby Rd in *Union* NC 26 Apr (Chris Huffstickler, m. obs.), and one at Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 28 Apr (Nathaniel Axtell).

Whimbrel: 5500 on Deveaux Bank *Charleston* SC 25 Apr (Nathan Senner, Maria Stager) was a remarkable count.

Long-billed Curlew: Pairs continued at the Rachel Carson Reserve Carteret NC though 14 Mar (Evans Lodge) and on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC through 15 Mar (Vic Nebes, Suzanne Roberts). Individuals were seen at New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 18 Mar (Moira Maus), on Deveaux Bank *Charleston* SC 27 Mar (Nathan Senner), on East Shackleford Banks 30 Mar (Trevor Sleight) and 23 Apr (Matt Spangler), and at the Rachel Carson Reserve 13 May (John Fussell).

Bar-tailed Godwit: The individual that has wintered on East Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC for the past five years remained until at least 23 Apr (Matt Spangler).

Ruddy Turnstone: Four at the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC 15 May (Jay Chandler) and one at the Goldsboro WTP *Wayne* NC 23 May (Ricky Davis) were good finds for sites away from the coast in spring.

Ruff: A female (Reeve) was seen at J. Morgan Futch Game Land *Tyrrell* NC 11-16 Apr (Ricky Davis, m. obs.).

Ruff (Reeve), 13 Apr 2021, J. Morgan Futch Game Land, Tyrrell County, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

Stilt Sandpiper: One photographed at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 27 Mar (Jamie Adams) was somewhat early for NC.

Dunlin: Inland sightings included one along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 4-5 May (Mike Resch, m. obs.), one at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 6-7 May (Chip Davis, m. obs.), one at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 9-10 May (Steve Patterson, m. obs.), two along Hooper Ln 10 May (Rebecca Crofton, et al.), and two at Lake Crabtree 21 May (Rob Rybczynski).

Purple Sandpiper: Four at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 27 Apr (Elizabeth Anderegg) were somewhat late.

Baird's Sandpiper: One at Bear Island WMA *Colleton* SC 1 May (Sidney Gauthreaux) was a good find for spring.

Short-billed Dowitcher: Inland sightings included one along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 10 May (Rebecca Crofton, m. obs.), 20 along Hooper Ln 12 May (Tim Novak), 44, a remarkable inland count, at Lake Adger *Polk* NC 12 May (Mike Resch), one at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 13 May (Henry Gargan, m. obs.), one in the Ellerbe Creek arm of Falls Lake *Durham* NC 18-24 May (Corinne Hibbard, Bruce Young, m. obs.), and seven at Lake Crabtree 21 May (Rob Rybczynski).

Solitary Sandpiper: One at Brookshire Park *Watauga* NC 26 Mar (Anita Clemmer, m. obs.) was somewhat early for the NC High Country. 19 at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 9 May (John Fussell, et al.) was a notable count for that county.

Willet: 400 at Howland Rock in the North River estuary *Carteret* NC 28 Feb (John Fussell, Curtis Merrick) and 275 there 28 Mar (Fussell, et al.) were notable counts. Three at Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 30 Apr (Timothy Carstens, m. obs.) and one at Nantahala Lake *Macon* NC 30 Apr (Allen Hurlbert) were good finds for the mountains.

Wilson's Phalarope: One was seen around the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 7-9 May (m. obs.) and 18-22 May (Daniel Irons, m. obs.).

Red-necked Phalarope: One seen and photographed on Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 26-27 Mar (Vince Kloster, m. obs.) was extremely early and a first for that county. Multiple sightings were made at inland sites in the latter half of May including five at the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC 18 May (Jay Chandler, Jamey Eaddy) with one continuing through 25 May (m. obs.), one at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 19-21 May (Eddie Owens, m. obs.), two on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 21 May (Denise Ward), up to four at Maple View Farm *Orange* NC 21 May (Lucretia Kinney, m. obs.) with one continuing through 23 May (m. obs.), one on Lake Norman *Mecklenburg* NC 22 May (Jeff Lemons, et al.), three at the Goldsboro WTP *Wayne* NC 23 May (Ricky Davis), two southeast of Louisburg *Franklin* NC 25 May (Phil Doerr), and one at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 30 May (Ed Corey). Along the coast, migrants were seen over the ocean from multiple

sites in late May, including an amazing count of 2125 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 24 May (Daniel Irons).

South Polar Skua: All-day sea-watches allowed for rare from-shore sightings at Cape Point *Dare* NC intermittently 22-28 May (Daniel Irons, m. obs.) including an amazing from-shore count of eight in eastbound flight 26 May (Irons). Skuas were also seen on seven of the eleven nearly-consecutive pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 20 May through 1 June, including counts of four on 20 May and 22 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Pomarine Jaeger: 12 in flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 25 May (Daniel Irons) was a remarkable from-shore count.

Parasitic Jaeger: All-day sea-watches allowed for impressive counts from Cape Point *Dare* NC this spring—24 in eastbound flight 11 Apr, 29 in eastbound flight 15 Apr, 42 mostly in westbound flight 22 Apr, 22 in eastbound flight 19 May, 37 in eastbound flight 22 May, and 23 in eastbound flight 25 May (Daniel Irons). Nine off Atlantic Beach *Carteret* NC 5 Apr (Matt Hafner) was a good count for that area.

Long-tailed Jaeger: Individuals in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 25 May and 26 May (Daniel Irons) were good finds from shore. This species was seen on seven of the eleven nearly-consecutive pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 20 May through 1 June, including five on 22 May and six on 25 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Dovekie: Though dovekies typically depart our waters by spring, this year multiple sightings were made throughout March. Counts included 41 on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 6 Mar (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.), 219 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 8 Mar (Daniel Irons), and 76 in eastbound flight off Cape Point 18 Mar (Irons). Individuals were seen as far south as Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC where one was seen and photographed by many 4-11 Mar (Tammie Vied Smith, m. obs.). That report is pending review by the SC BRC, as the species is still on the state's review list. One at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 27 Mar (Chelsea Bullock) was quite late. Multiple injured or moribund dovekies were found along the Bogue Banks *Carteret* NC this spring as late as 12 Apr (*fide* John Fussell).

Razorbill: 3861 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 9 Mar (Daniel Irons) was the peak count this spring. Farthest south was one photographed from the pier at Myrtle Beach SP *Horry* SC 18 Mar (Ted Falasco). One in eastbound flight off Cape Point 16 Apr (Irons) was rather late.

Atlantic Puffin: All-day sea-watches allowed for rare from-shore sightings from Cape Point *Dare* NC intermittently 12-24 Mar (Daniel Irons), including a count of nine in eastbound flight 18 Mar (Irons). One seen on Barden Inlet from the ferry to Cape Lookout *Carteret* NC 12 Apr (Edward Jenkins) was both unusual for that area and also very late.

Black-legged Kittiwake: Four were seen in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 24 Mar (Daniel Irons).

Black-headed Gull: An adult on Harris Lake *Wake* NC 13-20 Mar (Eddie Owens, m. obs.) was a good find for an inland site.

Little Gull: 12 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 24 Mar (Daniel Irons) was a notable count. An adult at Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC 7 Mar (Ricky Davis) and 23 Mar (Jamie Adams) possibly was the same individual seen at nearby Mason Inlet 7 Feb (Sam Cooper).

Laughing Gull: Farthest inland this spring was an adult on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 3 May (Clifton Avery, m. obs.).

Franklin's Gull: One in breeding plumage at Cape Point *Dare* NC 15 May (Daniel Irons, m. obs.) was very unusual for spring.

California Gull: Individuals were photographed at Cape Point *Dare* NC 18 Mar and 6 Apr (Daniel Irons). It has been seven years since this species was last reported in the Carolinas.

Iceland Gull: Individuals at the Horry County Landfill *Horry* SC 19 Mar (Chris Hill, John Hutchens) and on the Ft Fisher Spit *New Hanover* NC 20-27 Apr (Greg Massey, Harry Sell, m. obs.) were good finds for sites away from the Outer Banks.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 71 on Harris Lake *Wake* NC 6 Mar (Duncan Fraser) and 340 on Buckhorn Reservoir *Wilson* NC 21 Mar (Ricky Davis) were notable counts for inland sites. 70 at the Horry County Landfill *Horry* SC 20 Mar (Pam Ford, Craig Watson) was a notable count for SC. A first-winter individual at High Rock Dam *Davidson* and *Rowan* NC 7-8 Mar (Rob Rogers, m. obs.) was a first for either county. An adult at the Lake Murray Dam *Lexington* SC 5 May (Irvin Pitts) was rather late for an inland site.

Glaucous Gull: One continued from winter at Cape Point *Dare* NC until 13 Apr (Daniel Irons). A third-cycle individual photographed on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 31 May (Aidan Rominger) was quite late.

Least Tern: One at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 10 Mar (Kathleen O'Grady, Julie Mobley, Mary Jo Dawson) was quite early. Least Terns do not typically begin to show up until very late March or early April. One seen in the Ellerbe Creek arm of Falls Lake *Durham* NC 18 May (Corinne Hibbard, m. obs.) and one well-photographed in southern *Mecklenburg* NC 28 May (Strummer Edwards) were unusual for sites in the Piedmont, especially when not following the passage of a tropical storm.

Black Tern: One in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 21 Apr (Daniel Irons) was somewhat early.

Roseate Tern: One had returned to Cape Point *Dare* NC by 26 Apr (Daniel Irons). Ten in mostly eastbound flight off Cape Point 25 May (Irons) was a notable count.

Arctic Tern: Good numbers were had on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC in late May including 11 on 20 May, eight on 21 May, six on 23 May, and ten on 26 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). Six in the eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 25 May (Daniel Irons) was a notable from-shore count.

White-tailed Tropicbird: An adult was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 23 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

White-tailed Tropicbird, 23 May 2021, off Hatteras, Dare County, NC. Photo by Kate Sutherland.

Red-billed Tropicbird: An adult at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 25 Mar (Daniel Irons) was notable, though not unprecedented, as there have been a number of spring sightings at that site in the past decade. An immature bird was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 24 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Pacific Loon: Individuals in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 23 Apr and 26 May (Daniel Irons) were unusual for the latter half of the season.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: Multiple sightings were made from shore in late May including an amazing count of 1189 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 22 May (Daniel Irons). Individuals seen from shore on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 17 May (Aaron Given) and at Winyah Bay Inlet *Georgetown* SC 25 May (Wendy Allen) were notable for SC.

Northern Fulmar: One seen in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 24 Mar (Daniel Irons) was very unusual from shore.

Trindade Petrel: On pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC, two were seen 14 May and individuals were seen 20 May, 23 May, 27 May, and 28 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Fea's Petrel: Individuals were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 9 May and 24 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Wedge-tailed Shearwater: Pending review by the NC BRC is the reports with photographs of an apparent Wedge-tailed Shearwater seen during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 22 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). If accepted, the report would provide the first record of this pacific tubenose for the Carolinas, and, amazingly, for the entire Atlantic Ocean.

Cory's Shearwater: One in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 29 Apr (Daniel Irons) was somewhat early. Several sightings were made from shore in *Dare* NC from 16 May through the end of the period including a count of 195 in eastbound flight off Cape Point 25 May (Irons). 12 in eastbound flight off Atlantic Beach *Carteret* NC 28 May (Jacob Raber, et al.) was a good count for that area.

Sooty Shearwater: Multiple from-shore sightings were made in the latter half of May including a remarkable count of 6036 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 22 May (Daniel Irons).

Manx Shearwater: 26 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 22 May and 23 May (Daniel Irons) were notable counts for late spring.

Wood Stork: 225, adults and juveniles, at a nesting site in eastern *Robeson* NC 27 May (Ed Corey) was a good count for NC.

Magnificent Frigatebird: Individuals were photographed over the Cape Fear River in *Brunswick* NC 30 Apr (Jack Smallwood) and just south of Emerald Isle *Carteret* NC 21 May (Mark Reaves).

Masked Booby: Four sightings involving at least two individuals were made in *Dare* NC in the latter half of May—an immature off Cape Point 16 May (Daniel Irons), an adult off Cape Point 22 May (Irons), an adult off Jennette's Pier 25 May (Sarah Toner) and an immature on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras 31 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Masked Booby, 31 May 2021, off Hatteras, Dare County, NC. Photo by Kate Sutherland.

Brown Booby: Two were reported this spring—a juvenile off Southern Shores *Dare* NC 17 May (Wendy Addison) and a subadult off Cape Point *Dare* NC 19 May (Daniel Irons).

American White Pelican: 35 in flight over Roan Mountain *Mitchell* NC 30 Mar (John Britt) were very unusual for the northern mountains and a first for that county. A few of the higher counts this spring were 71 at High Rock Dam *Davidson* and *Rowan* NC 24 Mar (Thomas Gray), 130 on Marsh Island at Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 26 Apr (Merrill Lynch), and 58 in flight over Swannanoa *Buncombe* NC 28 May (Joe Meyer).

American Bittern: Nine along Brickhouse Rd in the Butner Game Land *Durham* NC 25 Apr (Norm Budnitz, et al.) was a notable count for a site in the Piedmont.

Snowy Egret: Farthest inland was one at Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 8 Apr (Chris Huffstickler) and 5 May (Tim Carstens, m. obs.). One at Lake Hickory in *Alexander* NC 21 May (Caroline Martin) was first for that county.

Reddish Egret: A white-morph individual on North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 28 May through 3 Jun (Derek Courtney, m. obs.) was unusual for the Outer Banks in spring.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: Two or more had returned to known nesting sites in Charlotte *Mecklenburg* NC by 19 Mar (Jeff Turner, m. obs.) and in Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC by 23 Mar (David & Susan Disher).

White-faced Ibis: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent White-faced Ibis on Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 22 Apr (John Kotz) and 25 Apr (Aaron Given). If accepted, the report would provide SC with its second definitive record.

Roseate Spoonbill: One photographed in Barnwell *Barnwell* SC 3 May (Mary Jo Dawson) was unusual for a site away from the coast in spring. One photographed in northwestern Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC 31 May (Nancy Tutterow) was especially unusual for a site in the Piedmont in spring, and a first for that county.

Swallow-tailed Kite: Migrants began showing up in SC in mid-March and were seen as far north as Southern Shores *Dare* NC by 24 Mar (Jim Gould). Individuals over Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 28 Mar (Jonathan Cantrell) and over I-85 in *Anderson* SC 7 May (Neil Owens) were unusual for sites so far inland in spring. One seen building a nest in the Green Swamp *Brunswick* NC 3 Apr (Derb Carter) was notable, as there are only a few nesting records for NC, the first from 2013.

Golden Eagle: An immature seen in flight over J. Morgan Futch Game Land *Tyrrell* NC 11 Apr (Ricky Davis) was rather late for a site in the coastal plain.

Cooper's Hawk: Three active nests were noted along the Outer Banks *Dare* NC in late spring, in Corolla, in Southern Shores, and on Roanoke Island (*fide* Jeff Lewis). Breeding along the coast is rare though increasing.

Mississippi Kite: Individuals over Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 15 May (Seth Buddy) and Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 29 May (Simon Thompson) were unusual for the mountain region in spring. 80+ over fields along Governor's Rd in *Brunswick* NC 15 May (Sam Cooper) was a notable count for NC.

Snowy Owl: One seen on a jetty at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 24 Mar (Carolyn & Don Hoss, *fide* John Fussell) was almost certainly the same individual seen on the nearby Core Banks from early February until 23 Mar (Michael Parrish). One photographed at Raleigh-Durham International Airport *Wake* NC 12 Apr (*fide* Carolina Raptor Center) was both very unusual for an inland site outside a major irruption year and also quite late.

Ash-throated Flycatcher: One photographed along Link Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 4 Mar (John Lynch) was unusual for spring. It is likely that bird spent the entire winter at that site.

Western Kingbird: One seen and photographed along Snow Mill Dr in *Spartanburg* SC 3 May (Andrew Dettro, m. obs.) was a great find for spring. Almost all sightings in the Carolinas are made in fall and early winter.

Gray Kingbird: Individuals were seen at North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 16-17 Apr (Ben Jessup, m. obs.) and on a powerline in Ocean Isle Beach *Brunswick* NC 12 May (Mark LaRose).

Gray Kingbird, 17 Apr 2021, Pea Island NWR, Dare County, NC.
Photo by Jeff Lewis

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: One returned to the traditional nesting site near the Rock Hill-York County Airport *York* SC by 27 Mar (Marcus & Cheryl Morris) and two were there by 17 Apr (Judy Walker). One was seen along Thompson Creek Rd in *Spartanburg* SC, at the same site where a pair was seen last year, 18 May into June (Neil Owens, m. obs.). Individual migrants were found along Lighthouse Rd in Buxton *Dare* NC 2 Apr (Brice Sweeney), at Bear Island WMA *Colleton* SC 22 Apr (Tom Riley), and in Kitty Hawk *Dare* NC 22 May (Jonathan Cooley).

Fork-tailed Flycatcher: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent juvenile Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 28-29 May (George McHenry, m. obs.). Interestingly, a Fork-tailed Flycatcher was seen at this same site on 21 May 2017.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Individuals were reported at seven sites from 5 May through 19 May, with one in Apex *Wake* NC 14-15 May (Susan Campbell, Steve Shultz, m. obs.) being the easternmost.

Alder Flycatcher: Individuals heard calling at separate sites in *Forsyth* NC 15 May and 17 May (John Haire) were good finds for the Piedmont.

Willow Flycatcher: One at Valle Crucis Community Park *Watauga* NC 21 Apr (Paul Laurent, Silas Powell, et al.) was early. Individuals heard calling on Roanoke Island *Dare* NC 27 May (Jeff Lewis) and at the Little Kinnakeet Lifesaving Station *Dare* NC 31 May (Daniel Irons) were good finds for the Outer Banks.

Say's Phoebe: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Say's Phoebe along the Pitt St Causeway *Charleston* SC 4 May (Tom Riley). This sighting was unusually late—all previous reports in the Carolinas are from the period from September through April.

Warbling Vireo: Very unusual for the Outer Banks *Dare* NC in spring were two along the Duck Park Boardwalk 9 May (Jeff Lewis), one along Park Rd in Frisco 11 May and 21 May (Daniel Irons), and one at Nags Head Woods 14 May (Irons).

Red-eyed Vireo: One photographed at Saluda Shoals Park *Lexington* SC 19 Mar (John Tjaarda) was somewhat early.

Yellow-green Vireo: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Yellow-green Vireo at Nags Head Woods *Dare* NC 14-15 May (Daniel Irons, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide NC with its first record of this tropical vireo.

Apparent Yellow-green Vireo, 15 May 2021, Nags Head Woods Ecological Preserve, Dare County, NC. Photo by Max Nootbaar.

Black-whiskered Vireo: Interestingly, at least two were seen in *Dare* NC in early May—one along Buxton Woods Trail 30 Apr (Daniel Irons), likely the same individual along nearby Open Ponds Trail 4 May (Irons), and a different individual on the Hatteras Inlet Peninsula 6-15 May (Irons).

Loggerhead Shrike: Successful nesting was confirmed in Morehead City *Carteret* NC when an adult was seen feeding two juveniles 28 May (John Fussell). Nesting in that county has become very rare over the last several decades.

Common Raven: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Common Raven at Oregon Inlet Campground *Dare* NC 17 Apr (Dawn Lloyd, m. obs.). One photographed at the adjacent Oregon Inlet Fishing Center 19 Apr (Karen Lebing) and one seen 40 miles to the south at Cape Point 22-24 Apr (Daniel Irons, m. obs.) were likely that same individual. If accepted, the report would provide the first record of this species at a site along the coast in 90 years and first ever for that county.

Cliff Swallow: Five along the Catawba River in *York* SC 14 Mar (Gretchen Locy) were rather early.

Sedge Wren: One at Lake Lure *Rutherford* NC 21 Apr (Bill Hooker, Mike Resch) was a first for that county.

Varied Thrush: The individual seen in a yard in Cary *Wake* NC throughout the winter was last seen 31 Mar (*fide* Susan Campbell).

Evening Grosbeak: Grosbeaks lingered from this winter's irruption until mid-May at several sites. Latest were individuals in northwestern *Wake* NC 17 May (Nancy Pinter) and at Lake Orange *Orange* NC 18 May (Brian Bockhahn).

Grasshopper Sparrow: 12 at the Greenville WTP *Pitt* NC 15 May (Howard Vainright) and 11 along Harllees Bridge Rd in *Dillon* SC 2 Jun (Shawn Smolen-Morton) were good counts for those areas.

Lark Sparrow: Sightings included one continuing from winter in Hemingway *Williamsburg* SC 6 Apr (Jay Chandler), one to two along Champion Rd in *York* SC 28 Apr through 6 May (Greg Hays, m. obs.), and one at the old lighthouse site in Buxton *Dare* NC 4-8 May (Daniel Irons, m. obs.).

Clay-colored Sparrow: Individuals were seen in a yard on Folly Island *Charleston* SC 21 Mar (Jarvis Baker), at Eastside Park *Pitt* NC 23 Mar (Howard Vainright), along College Rd in *Edgecombe* NC 1 Apr (Ann Brice), at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 12 Apr (Edward Jenkins), in a yard near Lake Wheeler *Wake* NC 23-24 Apr (Stacy & Natalie Barbour), and in a yard in Wake Forest *Wake* NC 25-26 Apr (Jeremy Wrenn).

Clay-colored Sparrow, 24 Apr 2021, Wake County, NC. Photo Stacy Barbour.

Dark-eyed Junco: One seen and photographed in southwestern *Moore* NC 21-31 May (Jeff Beane) was quite late for a site outside of the mountains.

LeConte's Sparrow: One seen and photographed at Riverside Park in Spruce Pine *Mitchell* NC 22-23 Apr (John Britt) was a great find for the mountain region and a first for that county.

Lincoln's Sparrow: One along Pokeberry Creek in northern *Chatham* NC 18 May (Mark Goodwin) was somewhat late.

Bobolink: 1000 along Snow Mill Dr in *Spartanburg* SC 4 May (Matthew Campbell) was a notable count.

Bullock's Oriole: A female was photographed at a feeder in *Durham* NC 17-18 Mar (Amanda McGuire). An adult male was photographed at a feeder in Moncks Corner *Berkeley* SC 3-4 Apr (Stephen Thomas).

Brewer's Blackbird: Sightings included one or more at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC from early February through 21 Mar (m. obs.), a male individual along Zion Church Rd in southeastern *Union* NC 26-29 Mar (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.), and a female individual at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 27 Mar (Mike Resch), 8 Apr (Casey Girard, m. obs.), and 25 Apr (Aaron Steed, m. obs.).

Worm-eating Warbler: One at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 28 Mar (Jeff Lewis) was somewhat early.

Blue-winged Warbler: Two were seen building a nest in the Norco Tract of Sandy Mush Game Land *Buncombe* NC 28 May (Kristin Hillegas, Krista Kelly, et al.).

Prothonotary Warbler: One along the Six Mile Creek Greenway *Mecklenburg* NC 19 Mar (Wayne Covington) was rather early.

Swainson's Warbler: One seen along the Edisto Nature Trail *Colleton* SC 28 Mar (Tate Curry) and photographed 29 Mar (Elizabeth Lyons) was early.

Tennessee Warbler: Individuals in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 30 Apr (Sam Cooper), at the northern end of Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 14 May (Daniel Irons), and on the Hatteras Inlet Peninsula *Dare* NC 24 May (Irons) were unusual for sites along the coast in spring.

Connecticut Warbler: Individuals were seen or heard singing in the Norco Tract of Sandy Mush Game Land *Buncombe* NC 11-16 May (Aaron Steed, m. obs.), at Fants Grove WMA *Anderson* SC 13 May (Kevin Kubach), at Jackson Park *Henderson* NC 14 May (Kevin Burke), at Rosman Community Park *Transylvania* NC 14-16 May (Nathaniel Axtell, m. obs.), and at Cliff Pitts WMA *Laurens* SC 17 May (Kubach). Notably, two were reported in the Norco Tract of Sandy Mush Game Land 14 May (Jeffrey Bailey) and 16 May (Seth Buddy).

Mourning Warbler: Two were reported this spring—individuals at Historic Bethabara Park *Forsyth* NC 10 May (John Haire, m. obs.) and in the Brevard Hospital Fields *Transylvania* NC 12 May (Michael Plauché).

Cape May Warbler: An adult male photographed at Coker Arboretum *Orange* NC 6 Mar (Donna Wilder) likely over-wintered in that area, as it was too early for a returning spring migrant. Interestingly, two over-wintered at that same site Feb-Mar 2017.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: A singing adult male photographed on Daniel Island *Charleston* SC 25 May (Tate Curry) was rather late for the SC Lowcountry.

Townsend's Warbler: One seen and photographed at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 13-14 Mar (Steve Patterson, m. obs.) was almost certainly the same individual seen at that site 22 Dec 2020 through 6 Jan 2021. One wonders how this bird remained undetected for so long.

Wilson's Warbler: Three at Miller Park *Forsyth* NC 9 May (Ron Morris, et al.) was a notable count for a single site in the Carolinas.

Western Tanager: Individual males were photographed in yards in southwestern *Wake* NC 1 Mar (Jessica Williams) and just east of Charlotte *Mecklenburg* NC 7 Mar (Jack Stutts). A male visiting a feeder in northern Raleigh *Wake* NC during the winter, first identified 24 Mar, continued at that site until the very late date of 30 Apr (Patty McQuillan).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: There were multiple reports of early returning spring migrants this year, the earliest being three in a yard in northern *Chatham* NC 26 Mar (Alan Avakian) and two in a yard in southeastern Charlotte *Mecklenburg* NC 29 Mar (Janet Palmer). This species does not typically show up in the Carolinas until mid-to-late April.

Lazuli Bunting: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of a Lazuli Bunting seen just west of Boone *Watauga* NC 9 May (Skip Sinanian).

Painted Bunting: A female or immature male photographed at a feeder at Snowbird Mountain Lodge *Graham* NC 13 May (Emilie Travis, et al.) was very unusual for the mountain region. The report is pending review by the NC BRC, as the species is on the review list for the mountain region.

Dickcissel: An adult male photographed in Washington *Beaufort* NC 27 Mar (Betsy Kane) was unusual for early spring. Peak counts at known nesting sites included five along Snow Mill Dr in *Spartanburg* SC 3-4 May (Michael Robertson, m. obs.), seven including six singing males at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 23 May (John Fussell, et al.), and 20 at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 30 May (Richard Taylor). Suggestive of attempted nesting were up to seven including up to five singing males along Zion Church Rd in southeastern *Union* NC 5 May into summer (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.), two pairs including a female carrying nesting material at the Greenville WTP *Pitt* NC 15 May (Howard Vainright), and two singing males in southeastern *Stokes* NC 29-30 May (Tony & Cara Woods). Individuals at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 5 May (Mike Resch, m. obs.) and at Mills River Park *Henderson* NC 16 May (Kevin Burke, Simon Thompson, m. obs.) were unusual for the mountain region.

CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

www.carolinabirdclub.org

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes to the extent allowable. Pay dues or make donations at https://carolinabirdclub.org/dues. Make change of address at https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile. Send correspondence regarding membership matters to the Headquarters Secretary. Answers to questions about the club might be found at https://carolinabirdclub.org/about.html.

ANNUAL DUES

Individual or non-profit	$30.00
Family	$35.00
Student	$15.00
Sustaining and businesses	$30.00
Patron	$50.00 and up
Life Membership (payable in four consecutive $100 installments)	$500.00
Associate Life Membership (in same household as life member)	$100.00

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SC Members-at-Large	Ed Blitch, Charleston SC	
	Mac Williams, Hartsville SC	

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The Chat

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Cover: White-faced Storm-Petrel off NC Coast, by Kate Sutherland

2020 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

Aaron Given[1], Chair, Giff Beaton, Jeff Click, Lex Glover, Simon Harvey, Chris Hill, Keith McCullough, Irvin Pitts, Steve Wagner

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In 2020, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee acted on 32 new reports, of which 25 were accepted and seven were not accepted. In addition, the committee reevaluated 25 historical reports that had received a split decision during the first round of voting. These reports were required to be sent to outside review in accordance with the previous version of the bylaws governing the SCBRC, but it appeared that no further action had been taken. The Committee felt that these reports should be resolved. Of the 25 historical reports, 4 were accepted, 12 were not accepted, and 9 will be further reviewed.

The accepted records detailed below add six species to South Carolina's Main List: Little Stint, Short-tailed Hawk, Sage Thrasher, Bronzed Cowbird, and Townsend's Warbler. The Main List now includes 445 species. Townsend's Solitaire has been elevated from the Provisional I List to the Definitive List based on photographic evidence.

The SCBRC had been working diligently on updating their bylaws since 2019 and in August 2020 the CBC Executive Committee voted to approve the new bylaws. The full version of the SCBRC bylaws can be found at https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/brc/SCbylaws.html but some of the major changes are summarized here.

1. North Carolina and South Carolina BRCs now have separate bylaws.
2. Committee members will be required to take at least a one-year "retirement" from the committee after two consecutive three-year terms.
3. The SCBRC has created an official Secretary position.
4. The Provisional II and Hypothetical Lists have been dissolved into the new Supplemental List.
5. Reports that do not receive either an "accept" or "non-accept" vote no longer need to be sent to outside reviewers for comments. These reports can now be rereviewed by the SCBRC.
6. The voting category NE (non-established) has been changed from a vote of acceptance to a vote of non-acceptance.

The annual meeting of the SCBRC was held virtually on 5 December 2020. The meeting was attended by Giff Beaton, Jeff Click, Aaron Given, Lex Glover, Simon Harvey, Chris Hill, Keith McCullough, and Steve Wagner. Aaron Given stepped down as Chair, and Keith McCullough was elected the new Chair for 2020. Lex Glover stepped down as a voting member but has agreed to stay involved with the committee as a non-voting member in the role of the Advisory Position. He also agreed to another

term as Secretary. Jeff Click and Chris Hill were reelected to the Nomination Committee. The Committee voted to remove Cave Swallow, Black-bellied Whistling Duck (inland only), and White-winged Scoter (inland only) from the review list. Ash-throated Flycatcher will be removed from the Review List coastally but will remain on the Review List as "inland only". There were no changes to the membership in 2020.

ACCEPTED REPORTS

Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*). 2020-009. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report along with photos of a Common Merganser in a pond near an industrial park in Florence (Florence County) on 1 February 2020.

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*). 2020-013. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report of a Red-necked Grebe on Lake Murray (Richland County) on 24 March 2020. Two individuals were originally photographed on 21 March 2020 by Zach Steinhauser (eBird) and at least one individual continued at this location until 5 April 2020.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*). 2020-001. Accept (9-0). David McLean submitted a written report along with two photos of a Western Grebe at Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR (Charleston County) on 5 January 2020.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia yucatanensis*). 2020-023. Accept (9-0). Marcie Daniels submitted a written report and photo of a Buff-bellied Hummingbird at a private residence in Summerville (Dorchester County) on 13 November 2020. This report represents the 3rd record of this species in South Carolina.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*). 2020-028. Accept (9-0). The Committee reviewed an incredible sighting by Nathan Dias of a Little Stint at Santee Coastal Reserve (Charleston County) on 19 December 2020. An account of the observation was chronicled on social media outlets such as Facebook and Safaritalk. Photos of the bird revealed that the bird was banded. The band number was readable from the photos and after some inquiries, it was found that the bird was banded in Sweden three months earlier on 19 September 2020. This sighting represents the 1st record of this species in South Carolina.

Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*). 2018-008. Accept (9-0). The Committee rereviewed an eBird report from Mark Vukovich and Matt Malin of a Parasitic Jaeger from 12 September 2018 at Lake Strom Thurmond (McCormick County). This record received a vote of 7-2 during the first vote.

Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*). 2020-004. Accept (9-0). Pam Ford submitted a written report along with photos of a Black Guillemot that was seen by many people on 18 January 2020 at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown County) on a field trip during the CBC's winter meeting.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*). 2020-007. Accept (9-0). Lauren Vaughn submitted a written report and two photos of a Glaucous Gull at North Myrtle Beach (Horry County) on 15 March 2020.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*). 2020-011. Accept (9-0). Jay Mager submitted a written report of a Pacific Loon that was seen on Lake Jocassee (Oconee County) on 28 February 2020. Nina Schoch provided two excellent photos. This bird continued at this location until at least 8 March 2020.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*). 2020-012. Accept (9-0). Irvin Pitts submitted a written report and four photos of a Pacific Loon that was seen on Lake Murray (Richland County) on 15 March 2020.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*). 2020-014. Accept (9-0). Steve Patterson submitted a written report and four photos of a Pacific Loon at Sadler's Creek State Park on Lake Hartwell (Anderson County) on 10 March 2020.

Fea's Petrel (*Pterodroma feae*). 09-03-08. Accept (8-1). The Committee rereviewed a written report and sketch by Nathan Dias from 53 miles offshore on 27 September 2003. At the time, some SCBRC members voted to not accept this record because they were not comfortable placing the species on the state list as "Fea's Petrel".

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*). 2020-018. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report and Brad Sale provided two photos of a juvenile Brown Booby that was seen on 18 October 2020 at Lake Strom Thurmond (McCormick County). This individual was first seen on 18 September 2020 and continued through the end of October.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*). 2020-027. Accept (9-0). The committee reviewed an eBird report from David Nicosia of a juvenile Brown Booby from 17 December 2020 at Folly Beach (Charleston County). The following day the bird was reported lethargic on the beach and was captured for rehabilitation by the Center for Birds of Prey in Awendaw where it later died after receiving treatment.

American Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*). 2017-018. Accept (8-1). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of an American Flamingo submitted by Linda Wilkerson on 13 September 2017 at Myrtle Beach State Park (Horry County). This report came one day prior to an American Flamingo being photographed at Tibwin and following Tropical Storm Irma. This record received a vote of 6-2 during the first vote.

Short-tailed Hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*). 2020-022. Accept (9-0). Keith McCullough submitted a written report and 1 photo of a Short-tailed Hawk at Caw Caw Interpretive Center (Charleston County) from 26 May 2018. This report represents the 1st record of this species in South Carolina.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savanna*). 2020-017. Accept (9-0). Charles Donnelly submitted a written report along with a photo of a Fork-tailed Flycatcher that was seen at Fort Moultrie National Historic Park on Sullivan's Island (Charleston County) on 16 September 2020. This report represents the 4th record of this species in South Carolina.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). 2020-003. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report of an Ash-throated Flycatcher at Watermark Lake in Mt. Pleasant (Charleston County) on 25 January 2020. Photos accompanying many eBird reports were also included. This individual was first reported on 17 January 2020 and was seen by many until 3 March 2020.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*). 2020-005. Accept (9-0). Mary Alice Tartler submitted a written report and four photos of an Ash-throated Flycatcher that was seen from 30 January to 8 March 2020 at Sea Pines Forest Preserve on Hilton Head Island (Beaufort County).

Black-whiskered Vireo (*Vireo altiloquus*). 2020-016. Accept (9-0). Josh Lefever submitted a written report along with several photographs of a Black-whiskered Vireo that was banded at the Kiawah Island Banding Station (Charleston County) on 25 August 2020. This report represents the 2nd record of this species in South Carolina.

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*). 2020-021. Accept (9-0). Michael Robertson submitted a written report and 6 photos of a Sage Thrasher from Lake Conestee Nature Preserve (Greenville County) on 19 November 2020. This report represents the 1st record of this species in South Carolina.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*). 2020-024. Accept (9-0). Ritch Lilly submitted a written report of a Townsend's Solitaire seen at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown County) from 11 October 2020. Word got out quickly and several people saw and photographed the bird. Unfortunately, the bird only stuck around for one day. This report represents the 1st record of this species in South Carolina.

Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*). 2020-020. Accept (9-0). Steve Patterson submitted a written report, three photographs, and a video of Western Meadowlark at Townville (Anderson County) on 12 November 2020. This individual stuck around most of the winter with the last sighting reported by Irvin Pitts on 23 February 2021. This report represents the 2nd record of this species in South Carolina.

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*). 2020-006. Accept (9-0). Matt Johnson submitted a written report of an adult male Bullock's Oriole a private residence in Pineville (Berkeley County) from 19 February 2020. This individual was seen by many people from 18 January to 7 March 2020.

Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*). 2020-025. Accept (9-0). Tate Curry submitted a written report and two photos of a Shiny Cowbird seen at a private residence on Daniel Island (Charleston County).

Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*). 2020-026. Accept (9-0). The SCBRC reviewed eBird reports with photos by Nathan Dias and Dennis Forsythe of a Bronzed Cowbird from a private residence in Charleston (Charleston County) from 22-24 November 2008. This sighting represents the 1st record of this species in South Carolina.

Nashville Warbler (*Leiothlypis ruficapilla*). 03-99-05. Accept (9-0). The SCBRC rereviewed a late winter/early spring report of a Nashville Warbler submitted by Sharon Turner at private residence in Myrtle Beach (Horry County on 19 March 1999.

Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*). 2020-029. Accept (9-0). Wendy Allen submitted a written report along with four photographs of a Townsend's Warbler seen at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown County) on 22 December 2020. This individual was seen by many observers between 22 December 2020 and 6 January 2021. The bird was then resighted again on 13-14 March 2021. This report represents the 1st record of this species in South Carolina.

NON-ACCEPTED REPORTS

Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*). 2020-015. Non-accept (0-9). The Committee considered a report of an Egyptian Goose seen by many observers at a farm pond in Columbia (Lexington County) in April 2020. The identification was correct based on photographs that were submitted but the SCBRC felt that origin of the bird remained in question. The chances that this individual escaped from a captivity is just as good as it being a vagrant from an established population. This species will be added to the Supplemental List with a designation of "questionable origin".

Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*). 2020-031. Non-accept (4-5). The SCBRC considered a report of a Cackling Goose at Santee National Wildlife Refuge (Clarendon County) in December 2020. The photos provided showed a small goose with a short neck and smallish bill compared to the Canada Geese it was near. Unfortunately, the photos did not show enough detail for a majority of the committee members to feel confident that smaller forms of Canada Geese could be ruled out.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*). 2020-030. Non-accept (0-9). The SCBRC considered a report of a Whooper Swan seen at Santee National Wildlife Refuge (Clarendon County) in December 2020. Photo documentation proved the identification to be correct, but the committee felt that the origin of this individual was in question. There is no pattern of vagrancy for this species in the eastern United States and it is apparently commonly kept in captivity. This species will be added to the Supplemental List with the designation of "questionable origin".

Garganey (*Anus querquedula*). 2020-010. Non-accept (3-6). The SCBRC considered a written report supported with photographs of a Garganey at Russell Burgess Coastal Preserve (Horry County) in March 2020. The committee was split on the identity of this individual. Some members felt that this bird was correctly identified while others noted inconsistencies in the plumage and facial pattern suggesting a hybrid or an escaped domestic duck.

Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*). 2018-044. Non-accept (3-6). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Common Merganser at Pawley's Island (Georgetown County) in December 2018. The committee felt that the description provided was not detailed enough to rule out other species.

Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*). 2020-008. Non-accept (0-9). The SCBRC considered a winter report of a Chimney Swift from Columbia (Richland County) in February 2020. The bird apparently struck the glass of a greenhouse and was temporarily immobilized. The reporter took a single photo of the bird in the hand. Unfortunately, the photo did not show enough information to rule out Vaux's Swift which would be a 1st record for South Carolina.

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*). 11-99-16. Non-accept (2-7). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Pomarine Jaeger at Lake Keowee (Oconee County) in November 1999. While the committee felt that this bird was a jaeger, the description did not rule out the possibility of a Parasitic Jaeger.

California Gull (*Larus californicus*). 01-04-01. Non-accept (2-7). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a California Gull at the Spring Island Landfill (Jasper County) in January 2004. The committee felt that the description did not rule out other possibilities.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*). 03-09-01. Non-accept (4-5). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Pacific Loon at Pawley's Island (Georgetown County) in March 2009.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*). 06-98-14. Non-accept (4-5). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of an Arctic Tern offshore of Murrell's Inlet in June 1998. A majority of committee members felt that Common Tern could not be ruled out based on the information in the report.

Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*). 01-01-01. Non-accept (3-6). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of Northern Goshawk at Kiawah Island (Charleston County) in January 2001. Most committee members noted that the report lacked sufficient details to rule out other species.

Cassin's Vireo (*Vireo cassinii*). 2018-047. Non-accept (2-7). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report along with several photos of a "Solitary" Vireo that was banded at the Kiawah Island Banding Station (Charleston County) on 28 October 2018. Although the

bird showed a very pale head, other characteristics fell within the overlap range of Cassin's and Blue-headed Vireo leading the committee to exercise caution with this potential 1st record for South Carolina.

Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*). 2018-031. Non-accept (3-6). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report from July 2018 of a Warbling Vireo along the Great Pee Dee River (Marlboro County). Committee members felt that the description suggested Warbling Vireo, but the possibility of other species had not been fully ruled out.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*). 01-05-04. Non-accept (3-6). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Varied Thrush at Ashmore Heritage Preserve (Greenville County) in January 2005. The report lacked enough details for the committee to accept.

American Tree Sparrow (*Spizelloides arborea*). 2020-002. Non-accept (4-5). The SCBRC considered a written report of an American Tree Sparrow at High Falls County Park (Oconee County) in January 2020. Most committee members noted that a key field mark (bicolored bill) was missing from the description which gave them hesitancy to accept.

Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*). 11-01-08. Non-accept (2-7). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Green-tailed Towhee from November 2001. Committee members noted a lack of detail in the report that did not rule out other species.

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*). 2019-024. Non-accept (1-8). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Bullock's Oriole from a private residence in Beaufort County in October 2019. Despite the description matching a male Bullock's Oriole, the short observation period without optics by the observer left the committee with some doubts.

Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*). 09-01-05. Non-accept (2-7). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Black-headed Grosbeak from Conway (Horry County) in May 2001. Inconsistencies with certain field marks noted in the report created some hesitancy for many committee members to accept this report.

UNRESOLVED REPORTS

The following reports received a majority of votes to accept but more than one vote to not accept. These reports will need to be reevaluated by the Committee.

Anna's x Calliope Hummingbird. 2018-024. Rereview (7-2). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report and photos of a banded Anna's x Calliope Hummingbird hybrid that was captured at a private residence in Spartanburg (Spartanburg County). This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*). 10-00-06. Rereview (6-3). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Ruff from Jasper County in October 2000. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*). 04-00-02. Rereview (6-3). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Ruff from Santee Coastal Reserve (Charleston County) in April 2000. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

Common Murre (*Uria aalge*). 2020-019. Rereview (5-4). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a common Murre from Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown County) in November 2020.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*). 05-98-22. Rereview (6-3). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of an Iceland Gull at Pawley's Island (Georgetown County) in May 1998. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*). 11-98-20. Rereview (6-3). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Masked Booby at Litchfield Beach (Georgetown County) in November 1998. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*). 01-03-12. Rereview (6-3). The SCBRC rereviewed two written reports of a White-faced Ibis at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (Jasper County) in November 2000. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*). 2019-009. Rereview (5-4). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report of a Say's Phoebe from Little Edisto Island (Charleston County) in September 2019. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*). 2019-008. Rereview (5-4). The SCBRC rereviewed a written report with photos of a Cave Swallow at Heritage Shores Nature Preserve (Horry County) in November 2019. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*). 12-98-21. Rereview (6-3). The SCBRC rereviewed a written winter report of a Blackpoll Warbler from Anderson County in December 1998. This report will be recirculated through the committee for a third time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee thanks all the observers who submitted reports, and those who encouraged others to submit reports. Your actions increase our understanding of bird occurrence in South Carolina.

2020 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

Nathan A. Swick [1], Chair, C. Wilson Cook, J. Edward Corey
Jan J. Hansen, Henry E. Link, Martina A. Nordstrand
Z. Taylor Piephoff, Steven P. Shultz, Andrew K. Thornton
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The make-up of the 2020 North Carolina Bird Records Committee (NCBRC) included additions of J. Edward Corey, Henry E. Link, and Martina A. Nordstrand as voting members; and the retention of Richard J. Davis and Harry E. LeGrand Jr. in advisory capacities. Keith E. Camburn, Jeffrey S. Pippen, and Robert W. Van Epps, rotated off the Committee for at least a one-year hiatus.

Accepted as Valid. The following reports were judged to be acceptable.

Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) (19-06) A report with photos submitted to the NCBRC by Patricia Finch of an apparent male Lazuli Bunting visiting a feeding station in *Carteret* County from 19-21 August 2019 was left unresolved in 2019, requiring a recirculation with review from outside experts. Upon rereview, the record was accepted 7-1(Inadequately Documented) with 1 abstention. This represents North Carolina's 3rd record of this western Emberizid.

Red-footed Booby (*Sula sula*) (20-01). Long considered a likely vagrant to North Carolina, a Red-footed Booby photographed on 8 June 2019 by Tom McElfrish from a cruise ship nearly 200 miles at sea, but assigned to *Carteret* County by closest point of land, was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC. Committee members questioned the accuracy of the location, but in the end decided to trust the observer's report and abide by closest point of land standards, even if it is a somewhat unsatisfying way to add this species to the NC list. This represents a 1st state record and, by virtue of photos, places Red-footed Booby on the Definitive List.

Antillean Nighthawk (*Chordeiles gundlachii*) (20-02). An extremely well documented record of Antillean Nighthawk from 8-15 August 2020 at the Cape Point Campground at Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Buxton (*Dare*) was considered by the NCBRC. The report by Josh Southern with photos and, especially, audio recordings made by Southern and others was considered conclusive and accepted unanimously (9-0). This represents the 3rd record of this Caribbean nightjar for the state, all of which come from the vicinity of Cape Point.

Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*) (20-04). The NCBRC considered a sight record of Black Guillemot from 9 February 2020 at Jennette's Pier (*Dare*) made by Ricky Davis. This record was accepted unanimously (9-0) and represents the state's 4th record of this alcid.

Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) (20-05). A sight record of a wintering Bobolink, made by Taylor Piephoff on the *Gaston* County Christmas Bird Count on 14 December 2019, was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC. Though regularly seen in migration throughout the state and a local breeder in the mountains, this would represent the 1st credible winter record in North Carolina of a bird that winters in the southern cone of South America. It is one of only a handful of winter Bobolink records in North America.

Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*) (20-06). The NCBRC unanimously accepted (9-0) reports made by Harry LeGrand and Jim Landau with photos by Ed Corey and others of a Bronzed Cowbird at a private residence in Morehead City (*Carteret*) seen from 15-28 February 2020. This represents a 1st record of this species for North Carolina, and by virtue of the many photos, it is placed on the Definitive List.

Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*) (20-07). A well-documented report by Ronnie Hewlette of a Bronzed Cowbird at a private residence in James City (*Craven*), from 4-9 May 2020 was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC. This record represents the 2nd for North Carolina, not even three months after the first!

Cassin's Kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*) (20-08). The NCBRC considered and unanimously accepted (9-0) a report with photos from Michelle Forte of a Cassin's Kingbird near the Jordan Lake dam in Moncure (*Chatham*) on 30 June 2020. This record was submitted by a self-described non-birder, and the committee appreciates the effort made to document this outstanding record. While Cassin's Kingbird has some pattern of vagrancy in the East, records in the summer are very rare. This represents a 1st record of this species in North Carolina, and by virtue of the accompanying photos it is placed on the Definitive list.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*) The year 2020 was an exceptional one for Kirtland's Warbler in North Carolina. The following three accounts are taken together. In addition to these, two additional credible reports from 30 Sep (*Avery*) and 6 Oct (*Buncombe)* were not considered by the NCBRC this year but may be evaluated in the future.

- (20-09) A well-documented subadult Kirtland's Warbler discovered at the Jordan Lake dam (*Chatham*) by Mark Montazer 27 September 2020 and present through at least the 30th, was accepted unanimously (9-0) based on a written report by Matt Lawing and photos by many.
- (20-15) A subadult individual at Haw River State Park (*Rockingham*), discovered on 4 October 2020, was accepted unanimously (9-0).
- (20-16) A singing adult male present at Meat Camp Environmental Studies Area (*Watauga*) from 13-14 May 2020 was accepted unanimously (9-0). The vocalizations were recorded and uploaded to Facebook for documentation. This was the first record of a singing bird in North Carolina.

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) (20-10). Long anticipated in the state, the NCBRC unanimously accepted (9-0) a Neotropic Cormorant discovered by Jelmer Poelstra at Jordan Lake's Crosswinds Marina (*Chatham*) based on submitted reports from Harry LeGrand, David Schroder, and Matt Lawing, along with many photos. This represents a 1st record of this species in North Carolina, and by virtue of the accompanying photos it is placed on the Definitive list.

Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) (20-11). A Pacific Golden-Plover, discovered at Cape Point Campground at Cape Hatteras National Seashore (*Dare*) on 18 July 2020 and present until 12 August 2020, was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC based on a written report by Ed Corey and photos by many. This represents the 2nd record of this species in North Carolina, the 1st record coming from the exact same location only a year earlier.

White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) (20-12). The NCBRC considered and unanimously accepted (9-0) the report of an apparent adult White-winged Tern present at the Salt Pond, Cape Hatteras National Seashore (*Dare*) from 21 May-2 June 2020 based on written reports by David Fischer and Ed Corey and photos by many. While this record represents a 2nd record for this species in North Carolina, it is the 1st with photos which moves White-winged Tern from the Provisional List to the Definitive List.

Painted Redstart (*Myioborus pictus*) (20-17). A stunning Painted Redstart, seen at Pea Island NWR (*Dare*) from 5-6 October 2020, was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC based on written reports by Karen Lebing and Derb Carter and photos by many. This unexpected record represents the 1st for this species in North Carolina, and by virtue of the photos it is placed on the Definitive List.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*) (20-18). The NCBRC unanimously accepted (9-0) the report of an adult male Black-throated Gray Warbler at Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge (*Mecklenburg*), seen on 6-7 September 2020 from photos and notes submitted to eBird by many birders. This represents the state's 5th accepted record of this western warbler, and only the second record for the piedmont region.

Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*) (20-19). A report of a female-type Townsend's Warbler, seen and photographed 23-24 September 2020 at a private residence in Hatteras village (*Dare*) and reported to eBird by Haley Rosell, was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC. This is the 5th record accepted by the BRC, though there are an additional two credible reports. All but two previous accounts have come from Dare County.

MacGillivray's Warbler (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) (20-20). The report of an adult male MacGillivray's Warbler from Duck Town Park (*Dare*) and submitted with photos by Nate Swick was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC. The bird was initially discovered on 3 December 2020 and was subsequently seen by birders into 2021. This represents the 4th record of this species for the state, all of which come from the coastal plain.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) (20-21). The NCBRC reviewed and unanimously accepted (9-0) a written report from Kent Fiala, along with many photos from additional birders, of a Varied Thrush at a private residence in Cary (*Wake*). The bird was initially seen in early December (reported to the birding community on 3 December) and present into 2021. This represents the 5th record of this western thrush in the state, all but one of which have been in the piedmont region.

Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis/occidentalis*) (20-22) An *Empidonax* flycatcher identified as Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher was captured on private property in *Randolph* County and banded by John Gerwin, et al, of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences on 11 December 2020. It was considered by the NCBRC, who ultimately accepted it 8-0 with 1 abstention based on photos and measurements taken while the bird was in hand. The committee agreed that Pacific-slope Flycatcher was the far more likely candidate, but as this species pair is exceptionally difficult to identify visually, and lacking any recording or description of vocalizations, felt that Pacific-slope/Cordilleran is the safer designation. This represents the 2nd record of this species pair for North Carolina.

Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) (20-24). The NCBRC considered and unanimously accepted (9-0) the report of a first-year male Vermilion Flycatcher on a private farm in *Martin* based on photos by multiple birders. This individual was originally discovered by Bob Koch on 8 December 2020 and present into 2021. This represents the 7th record for North Carolina, all of which come from the coastal plain.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savanna*) (20-25). A photo with notes of Fork-tailed Flycatcher at South Point of Ocracoke Island (*Hyde*) on 29 June 2020 and submitted to eBird by Camron Robertson and Chelsea Weithman was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC. This represents the 4th record of this South American austral migrant in North Carolina.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*) (20-26). The report of a Black-throated Gray Warbler at North End Park on Roanoke Island (*Dare*), initially discovered by Jeff Lewis on 19 December 2020 and present into 2021, was unanimously accepted (9-0) by the NCBRC based on photos submitted by Lewis and many birders. This represents the 6th accepted record of this western warbler in North Carolina, and the second of 2020.

Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*) (20-27). An Allen's Hummingbird report submitted by Steve Shultz of a bird at a private home in Charlotte (*Mecklenburg*) was unanimously accepted 8-0, with 1 abstention. The committee considered a written report by Shultz with in-hand measurements taken by bander Susan Campbell. This represents the 4th record for North Carolina, and the second from the western piedmont.

Not Accepted. The following reports were judged to be not accepted.

Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) (19-14) A sight record of a Lazuli Bunting from *Dare* on 19 October 2020 was not accepted by a vote of 1-7 (Inadequately Documented), with 1 abstention on a second ballot. Outside reviewers had uncertainty based on description of the plumage which was reflected by the committee. In the end, it was felt that there was not enough to confirm such a sighting.

Antillean Nighthawk (*Chordeiles gundlachii*) (20-03) A report of Antillean Nighthawk from *New Hanover* on 16 June 1990, was not accepted by the committee by a vote of 2-4 (Inadequately Documented) with 3 abstentions. Committee members called into question the submission of the report 30 years after the initial observation. It was noted that while the observer could indeed have seen Antillean Nighthawk, it would be unlikely that such details necessary to confirm what would be, in effect, a retroactive 1st state record, could be recalled accurately after so many years.

Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*) (20-12) The winter season report of a Philadelphia Vireo from *Craven* was considered by the NCBRC and not accepted by a vote of 1-7 (4 Inadequately Documented, 3 Unacceptable Sighting), with 1 abstention. The observer did not rule out other similar, and more likely species, even noting that their own first impression was not of the species so reported.

Western Spindalis *(Spindalis zena)* (20-13) The report of a potential state 1st Western Spindalis from *Dare* was not accepted by the committee on a vote of 0-8 (5 Inadequately Documented, 3 Unacceptable Sighting), with 1 abstention. The committee notes that documentation submitted was inadequate for a record of such magnitude, and that multiple species of Spindalis, among other more likely species, were not sufficiently eliminated.

Unresolved - Outside Review Pending

Hammond's Flycatcher *(Empidonax hammondii)* (20-23). An *Empidonax* flycatcher identified as Hammond's Flycatcher was captured on private property in *Randolph* County and banded by John Gerwin, et al, of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences on 12 December 2020. The NCBRC considered the record, a potential 1st for this species in North Carolina, and voted to accept the record 7-1(Inadequately Documented), with 1 abstention. But because the report received 2 non-acceptance votes, it requires review from outside the committee and subsequent recirculation with these outside opinions or any additional comments or photos from other observers.

Summary

With this round of voting, Red-footed Booby, Bronzed Cowbird, Cassin's Kingbird, Neotropic Cormorant, and Painted Redstart are added to the Definitive List. White-winged Tern is moved from the Provisional List to the Definitive List. Hammond's Flycatcher is unresolved with outside review pending.

The total number of accepted species from North Carolina is now **490** (+5 over the final 2019 list) of which 477 are Definitive (+6 over the final 2019 list), two are considered Not Established, and 11 are Provisional (-1 from the final 2019 list).

Literature Cited

LeGrand, H., J. Haire, N. Swick, and T. Howard. Birds of North Carolina: their Distribution and Abundance

2020 Spring Migration Counts in North Carolina

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Needless to say that Covid-19 caused havoc in 2020 and made it very difficult for many count areas to conduct spring counts. Because of problems accessing some areas, and the limitations caused by team members needing to social distance, only about half of the usual count areas were able to complete counts. In some cases count coordinators had to resort to less orthodox methods to complete their counts, but they got the job done. Only ten areas completed counts, three from the mountains and seven from the piedmont, compared to the usual total of 19 to 21 over the past 15 years, seven to eight from the mountains, 12 to13 from the piedmont, and one from the coast. Since no coastal areas were included this year, many typical coastal species were missed. However, many of the individual counts had excellent results, so the birds were certainly present. Total species (197) was naturally well below the average (234), but above the average for counts completed during years when no coastal count was conducted. Total individuals (51,491) were about 30,000 to 35,000 below the average year, which isn't bad considering there were half the usual count areas. There were also a little more than half (238) the usual number of participants (415).

In the mountains, the Watauga count had to resort to less orthodox procedures as a result of sudden wintry weather conditions. As a result, some areas were covered more than once, and the results were much higher than average. Also, although both of the high elevation mountain counts were completed, none of the counts that include mountain valleys in the southern mountains were carried out, so the total numbers were skewed towards the higher elevation species, and some of the lower elevation species in that area were missed altogether. In contrast, the piedmont area was well represented from east to west.

Although many species were missed, many unusual birds were found in areas they don't often occur. These include such species as Red-necked Grebe and Philadelphia Vireo on the Greensboro count, Red-throated Loon and Horned Lark on the Kerr Lake count, six American Bitterns, a Snowy Egret and a Vesper Sparrow on the Durham count, Glossy Ibis, Swallow-tailed Kite, and Dickcissel on the Chapel Hill count, Vesper Sparrow, Golden-winged Warbler, and Wilson's Warbler on the Watauga count, and Cerulean Warbler on the Rockingham count.

Most common species found in the mountains included Dark-eyed Junco, Chestnut-sided Warbler, American Robin, Eastern Towhee, and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Some of these may show up as most common because the count was skewed towards higher elevation species. In the piedmont, the most common species were Double-crested Cormorant, Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren, Red-eyed Vireo, and American Crow. Some species missed include Bachman's Sparrow, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, and Peregrine Falcon. The absence of the Southern Pines and any coastal counts were the main cause for the missing sparrow and woodpecker. The Peregrine Falcon has been

absent the last couple of years mainly because the once reliable pair at Devil's Courthouse seems to have given up nesting there.

Hopefully the Covid-19 pandemic will have abated sufficiently enough that more areas will be able to complete counts in 2021 and 2022.

Details of individual counts including names of compilers and participants as well as count highlights and a list of species found exclusively on each count follow.

Mountains

Pisgah Ridge, Great Balsam and Plott Balsam Mountains IBA – count dates spanned from May 15-20 with teams selecting one of those days to do their section, 83 species, 3266 individuals, 25 participants in 12 parties, 66.87 party-hours. Elevation ranges for this count run from 3500 to 6100 feet. Weather: Excellent over most of the count period with one morning of intermittent rain. Temperature 45-75°F.
Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)
Participants: Miles Buddy, Seth Buddy, Kevin Burke, Tim Carstens, Nancy Casey, Ron Clark, Robert Emmott, Tom Flagg, Robert Johnson, Stacy Johnson, John Koon, Gail Lankford, Charlie Lankford, Dave Minnich, Nora Murdock, Naomi Otterness, Catherine Reid, Kitti Reynolds, Russell Roe, Marcus Simpson, Alan Smith, Sidney Snyder, Marilyn Westphal, Connie Wulcowicz and Stan Wulcowicz
Exclusives: Northern Saw-whet Owl, Black-capped Chickadee
Notes: It was an unusual count in an unusual situation. As the coronavirus epidemic closed parks and national forests it looked like the count would have to be cancelled, but about 10 days before the typical start date the Blue Ridge Parkway announced that it would be reopening the road on May 15th, the typical start weekend for this count. It required some scrambling to find volunteers, but fortunately there were a lot of people anxious to get out and do some birding in remote areas where social distancing was easy. The virus did cause some complications forming teams as they couldn't ride in the same car, but most areas are largely walked anyway, and some sections were split up to make it easier. A few areas were still inaccessible, but most were covered. The count suffered a couple of disasters with one participant slipping on wet rocks early in the count and breaking her arm, and another slipping at the end of the count and breaking her leg, but both are recovering well.

Despite the late organization and accidents, 83 species were counted, which is higher than average, 3266 individuals counted, also higher than average, during 66.87 team hours, which was about average. Overall it was quite a typical count with few unusual species found. Gail and Charlie Lankford found a Black-billed Cuckoo and Nancy Casey and Russell Roe found one Yellow-rumped Warbler along Black Balsam Road where it is believed a small colony has attempted breeding for the past few years. With only one found the colony may have either moved or given up. Two teams, Nora Murdock/Robert Emmott and Kevin Burke/Ron Clark found Red Crossbills. Two teams, Kevin Burke/Ron Clark and the Johnsons/Barbara Reynolds found late Ruby-crowned Kinglets, always suspicious as far as possible breeding. The Black-capped/Carolina Chickadee conundrum continues with most birds from Black Balsam to the end of the parkway singing the Black-capped song. Alder Flycatcher numbers were down (23), but not

surprising as some of the prime area for them wasn't accessed, but Least Flycatchers were quite abundant (57) as their territories are more widespread along the parkway.

As usual the most abundant species was Chestnut-sided Warbler (389) and second most abundant was Dark-eyed Junco (241, although plentiful, fewer than usual). These were followed by Blue-headed Vireo (203), Eastern Towhee (192), Black-throated Green Warbler (169), Golden-crowned Kinglet (156), Black-throated Blue Warbler (149), American Robin (147), Canada Warbler (136), and Veery (132).

Many thanks to all the volunteers who quickly responded to the call and made this another successful count, and special thanks to those injured in the cause.
Marilyn Westphal

Black Mountains IBA – count period ran from May 23-28 with teams selecting one of those days to complete their section, 60 species, 1602 individuals, 15 participants in 11 parties with some teams covering a second section on a different day, 28.90 party-hours. Weather: Typical May weather for Mount Mitchell area, cold early and sometimes foggy early, then warming by mid-morning with some sun later. Elevation range for this count is 3000 to 6684 feet with most of the count area above 4000 feet. This count has been conducted since 2006 with 2008 missed because of road closures.
Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)
Participants: Robert Emmott, Chris Jacquette, John Koon, Charlie Lankford, Gail Lankford, Dave Minnich, Nora Murdock, Mike Resch, Barbara Reynolds, Mark Simpson, Alan Smith, Sidney Snyder, Simon Thompson, Marilyn Westphal
Exclusives: none
Notes: As with the Balsam Mountains Count, this count required last minute recruiting for participants as we did not know whether the area would reopen before the count period. Fortunately, most of the area did reopen on time, although the two forest roads were still closed and the trails between the park and the forest roads were closed, so less area was covered than typical for this count. Because of the virus there were also limitations for teams traveling together.

As a result of the limitations, the total bird count (1602) was lower than average as were the total party-hours (28.90), but the total species count (60) was typical for the area. Most notable misses were Turkey Vulture and Ruby-throated Hummingbird and, although not missed completely, there was only one Ruffed Grouse. The only relatively unusual species found was a Magnolia Warbler, although they have been appearing in the area near Mount Mitchell in late May and early June for the past few years and there may be some attempted breeding. There was also one Yellow-rumped Warbler, which has also been found at Mount Mitchell in the past few years and may also be attempting to breed.

Most common species found were as follows: Dark-eyed Junco (239), which seems to have bounced back from a couple of lower count years, Golden-crowned Kinglet (199), Black-throated Green Warbler (117), Blue-headed Vireo (104), Winter Wren (91), Eastern Towhee (71), Veery (68), Hermit Thrush (63, first time in the top ten), Blackburnian Warbler (62), and Canada Warbler (61). Once again, Pine Siskins, Red Crossbills, Least and Alder Flycatchers were present, but in low numbers.

Thanks again to the participants who this year stepped up on short notice to volunteer for the count- Marilyn Westphal.

Watauga County – Count date May 10th, 141 species, 4735 individuals, 31 participants in 13 teams, 164.80 party-hours. Weather: Mostly sunny with snow showers early. Temperatures 25-60°F. Wind light to 30mph.
Compiler: Guy McGrane (badgerboy@wilkes.net)
Participants: Meredith Boothe, Bob Cherry, Nicholas Cline, Martha Cutler, Gina Diggs, Steve Dowlan, Bill Dunson, Margaret Dunson, Elizabeth Faison, Pat Geiger, Richard Gray, Katie Griffith, Tonya Lee, Merrill Lynch, Travis Marceron, Guy McGrane, Sheryl McNair, Wes McNair, Arthur Merschat, Janet Paulette, Janice Pope, Silas Powell, Max Ramey, Amy Renfranz, Shelley Ryal, Sarah Schnackel, Debbie Shetterly, Jimmie Shetterly, Curtis Smalling, Charlie Sykes, and Theresa Waldspurger.
Exclusives: Lesser Scaup, Short-billed Dowitcher, Willow Flycatcher, Purple Finch, Vesper Sparrow, Golden-winged Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Wilson's Warbler
Notes: The 2020 Watauga County spring count, was the third year in a row, for this relatively new count. This year, the schedule was somewhat unconventional in response to challenging conditions, both the pandemic virus situation and the very unusual late season cold front that brought winter-like conditions on the originally scheduled day of the count, May 9. Many of the participants were not going to be able to spend much time birding on that day, and we also wanted to give birders a chance to extend their birding into less crowded times at some of our more popular birding spots, so we made it a three-day count, from May 9 thru May 11.

The combination of this extended count period and birders staying alone resulted in significantly higher effort than in past years, and likely higher effort than we will have in future counts as well. Our party hours were 165, compared to 50 and 42 the previous two years. So the numbers may be skewed higher this year than past or future, as shown by our very high species count of 141, not including domestic species. This compares to 115 and 102 in our first two years, 2018 and 2019.

Consistent with regional findings, shorebird numbers were way up this year, and newly finished floodplain restoration work at Brookshire Park, provided extensive bare, wet mudflats, which attracted lots of shorebirds, increasing this trend.

Our most notable birds included a Short-billed Dowitcher at Price Lake, a first area report in about 40 years, a Lincoln's Sparrow along the Watauga River, very tough to find in spring here, a Virginia Rail which continued through the count weekend at the Boone Greenway, 14 Semipalmated Plovers, a bird reported only a few times before ever in the county, and a pair each of Mockingbirds and Blue Grosbeaks, tough to find here, were noted at lower elevation in the eastern end of the county. Also notable were five species of wrens, including Sedge and Marsh Wren.

Our respectable count of warbler species, at 27, included a Wilson's Warbler, quite a rare migrant in the northern mountains, although there seemed to be a statewide flush of them this spring. Seven of the warbler species appeared to be strict migrants, and numbers of those were quite low as usual in spring here, mostly with just a few birds each.

Birds missed that we can usually find without too much trouble in the spring included Ruffed Grouse, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Barred Owl, Whippoorwill, Great-crested Flycatcher, and Swainson's Thrush. Ruffed Grouse seem to be declining very

quickly, and it has been almost impossible to hear one drumming anywhere in the area in the last ten years or so, perhaps indicating that even where present, there is no need for territorial behavior. Yellow-billed Cuckoo seemed to return to the county somewhat later than usual this year.
Guy McGrane

Piedmont

Iredell County – count date April 26th, 107 species, 2506 individuals, 11 participants in three parties, 25.00 party-hours. Weather: Partly cloudy, wind calm, temperature ranged from 49-71°F. Count circle is centered on the South Yadkin River bridge on Chipley Ford Rd in northern Iredell County.
Compiler: Ron Underwood (rongto@gmail.com)
Participants: Debbie Birnley, Cynthia Dickerson, Bill English, Larry Marlin, Johnny Marshall, Caroline Martin, Janice Powell, Garnet Underwood, Ron Underwood, John Whitaker and Mark Whitaker
Exclusives: Eurasian Collared Dove, American Pipit
Notes: Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, our count was conducted on a limited basis, with no meet-up prior to the count, and no post-count luncheon. Despite these limitations, we had good participation and a nice variety of birds.
Ron Underwood

Rockingham County – count date April 30th, 124 species, 2343 individuals, seven participants in four parties, 19.50 party-hours. Weather: Heavy rain and flash flooding overnight and at dawn, the rest of the day was cloudy with temperature 58-68°F.
Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)
Participants: Clay Barham, Penny Barham, Brian Bockhahn, Debbie Irving, Janet Ledbetter, David Pennebaker, Martin Wall, Cara Woods, and Tony Woods.
Exclusives: Cerulean Warbler
Notes: The 8th Rockingham County Spring Bird Count was held on Thursday April 30, 2020. Nine observers in four parties tallied a record high 124 species (average 112, previous high 118) and 2343 birds (average 1874). Totals were led by 109 Northern Cardinals, 99 Mourning Doves and 98 American Robins. Additional species seen during count week: Eastern Wood-pewee, Blue-winged Warbler, American Redstart and Rusty Blackbird.

First Count Records: a single Semipalmated Plover was on a farm pond at first light off Ledbetter Road, and I cannot believe it took eight years to finally get a Chestnut-sided Warbler, and by two parties!

Other goodies include two parties with two different Bald Eagles for second count record (now nesting in area), our second Black-billed Cuckoo in Waterfalls territory, second Bank Swallow over Mayo Mountain ponds, second Gray-cheeked Thrush on Mayo Mountain loop trail, second Cerulean Warbler in Waterfalls territory, second Swamp Sparrow in Airport section and second Baltimore Oriole at Mayo Mountain ponds.

Third Lesser Yellowlegs in Stoneville area, third Least Sandpiper on Ledbetter Road,

third Least Flycatcher around Mayo Mountain ponds, third Cliff Swallow and three parties with our third Ruby-crowned Kinglets.

Misses: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Eastern Screech-owl and Blackpoll Warbler.

A side note, instead of the rare dragonfly, on the summit of Cedar Mountain I was able to record video/audio a pair of Mountain Chorus Frogs! In NC this species is only known from Cherokee county, NC, further evidence of this unique county.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count.

Brian Bockhahn

Greensboro – count date May 2nd, 128 species, 7578 individuals, 41 participants, 132.50 party-hours. Weather: A perfect spring day, temperature 43-74°F. Skies were partly cloudy, and the wind was light from the southwest, averaging 5 to 10 mph with occasional gusts to 15 mph. We really couldn't have asked for better weather

Compiler: Elizabeth Link (elzlink@yahoo.com)

Participants: Nancy Adamson, Carolyn Allen, Frank Cashwell, Megan Damico, Scott DePue, Jim Eldrett, Lynne Gray, Chris Groh, Amy Hanson, Asha Khopkar, Elizabeth Link, Henry Link, Clarence Mattocks, Julien McCarthy, Shelley McDiarmid, Lynn Moseley, Roberta Newton, Lane Oldham, Judith Pait, Ann Presnell, Emily Reeve, Judy Roy, Danny Royster, Wallace Sills, Brian Stadler, Melanie Stadler, Ann Steighner, Linda Sumner, Paul Sumner, Emily Talbert, Andrew Thornton, Emily Tyler, Ann Van Sant, Anita Vigorito, Joe Vigorito, Ann Walter-Fromson, Matt Wangarin, Stella Wear, Tom Wear, George Wheaton, and Melissa Whitmire.

Exclusives: American Black Duck, Red-necked Grebe, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Forster's Tern, Philadelphia Vireo

Notes: The Spring Bird Count was held in Greensboro on Saturday, May 2nd, 2020. Because of the quarantine and stay-at-home orders in place for the COVID-19 pandemic, our count teams were a bit different than usual. Teams broke up and covered their territories in ones or twos, found a way to get around without piling into one car, a few birded in their neighborhoods, and altogether we ended up with 40 people counting, which is about average for us, and pretty good coverage of our count circle.

Our species count was 128, and the number of individual birds counted was 7568 both of which are right about average for our count circle. We had a combination of winter birds that are sometimes gone by the time we do the count, such as Greater Scaup, Hooded Merganser, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet; and late-arriving birds such as Acadian Flycatcher and Mississippi Kite that frequently haven't arrived by the time we do the count. While we have sometimes gotten the Mississippi Kite on count week, this is only the second time they've actually appeared on the count.

Oddities included a Red-necked Grebe, seen by Matt Wangarin on Lake Townsend. The bird had been spotted on the lake at various times for at least a couple of months and was still hanging out on count day. Other species that we don't usually pick up included Forster's Terns, Caspian Tern seen on Count Week, a Philadelphia Vireo, which has only been seen on the count three previous times, spotted by Melanie Stadler's group, and Blue-winged Warbler.

Many thanks to everyone who helped with the count. Your efforts are appreciated more than ever!
Elizabeth Link

Chapel Hill – count date May 3rd, 135 species, 11,214 individuals, 48 field observers in 27 teams with one feeder watcher, 161.60 party hours. Weather: Low 55F, high 85F; wind SW 5-12 mph; clear, no rain.
Compiler: Will Cook (cwcook@duke.edu)
Participants: David Anderson, Steve Backus, Jin Bai, Patsy Bailey, Jon Bennett, Brian Bockhahn, Norm Budnitz, Jim Capel, Fleeta Chauvigne, Carol Chelette, Will Cook, Maria de Bruyn, Nan DeWire, Barbara Driscoll, Tom Driscoll, Kent Fiala, Cynthia Fox, Jim George, Mary George, Steve Graves, Jan Hansen, Loren Hintz, Karen Hogan, Bo Howes, Judy Jones, Elizabeth Keating, Larry Kim, Gerald King, Gene Kingsley, Anne Miller, David Murdock, Judy Murray, Vicki Nebes, Alex Nickley, Ben Nickley, Elaine Norwood, Joe Norwood, Don Pelly, Jelmer Poelstra, Marc Ribaudo, Margaret Scott, Roger Shaw, David Smith, Judy Smith, Richard Snow, Paul Taille, Margaret Vimmerstedt, and Bruce Young
Exclusives: Glossy Ibis, Swallow-tailed Kite, Dickcissel
Notes: The Chapel Hill spring count on Sunday, May 3, 2020, recorded an exceptional 135 species, our highest in 34 years! The high count was helped by the count date being the earliest in 10 years, with a combination of high observer effort and good luck with soaring vagrants and migrant thrushes and warblers. This year's species total of 135 was 16 above the 10-year average of 119 and the total number of birds, 11,214, was well above the average of 7694. Effort on the count was outstanding, the highest since 1986, with 161.60 party hours (average 118.50). However, the number of birds per party hour, 69.40, was not far above the average of 65.30

Remarkably we found two new species for the count, which was initiated in 1952 and has been conducted annually since 1957: Glossy Ibis and Swallow-tailed Kite. The Glossy Ibis was seen by Jelmer Poelstra at the Cub Creek arm of Jordan Lake as it soared with an Osprey and a few vultures, then glided away to cross the Morgan Creek arm of the lake eastward. The Swallow-tailed Kite was seen by Steve Backus (in his kayak) as it soared with Turkey Vultures over the Bush Creek arm of Jordan Lake. Both are first records for the count, though we did have a count week Swallow-tailed Kite in 2012. Other stellar rarities included our third Red-breasted Merganser (Brian Bockhahn at Jordan Lake), our second Mississippi Kite (Jin Bai, Dogwood Acres), first Warbling Vireo since 1994 (Marc Ribaudo, Jordan Lake), and our second Dickcissel (Jan Hansen). Other species we usually miss included Northern Bobwhite, American Woodcock, Bonaparte's Gull, Caspian Tern, American Kestrel, two Gray-cheeked Thrushes, four Cape May Warblers, two Bay-breasted Warblers, and Blackburnian Warbler.

We had an incredible number of record highs: 86 Wood Duck (average 30), 211 Black Vulture (average 63), 200 Turkey Vulture (average 99), 44 Barred Owl (average 15), 51 Red-headed Woodpecker (average 17), 136 Downy Woodpecker (average 67), 27 Hairy Woodpecker (average 11), 37 Pileated Woodpecker (avg 21), 120 Great Crested Flycatcher (average 83), 111 Acadian Flycatcher (average 71), 104 Brown-headed Nuthatch (average 71), 35 Veery (previous high 16 in 1978, average 4), 33 Swainson's

Thrush (average 13), 187 Gray Catbird (average 65), 50 Orchard Oriole (average 17), and 93 Black-and-white Warbler (average 17).

There were no big misses or record lows, though the count of 23 Song Sparrows is far below the average 49 and lowest since 2001.

Team honors: Jan Hansen had an amazing 94 species at University Lake and the western portion of the count circle, followed by Brian Bockhahn at Stagecoach Road, with 90. Jelmer Poelstra, covering Cub Creek at Jordan Lake, counted the most individual birds, with 915.

We had 48 field counters in 27 parties (average 38 in 19 parties), with one feeder watcher. Thanks to all counters for their efforts on this stellar day!
Charles W. "Will" Cook

Durham – count date April 26th, 138 species, 7912 individuals, 24 participants in 14 parties, 79.00 party-hours. Weather: Mostly clear skies, light winds, temperature 54°-74°F.
Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)
Participants: Jeff Blalock, Brian Bockhahn, Vern Bothwell, Gail Boyarsky, Norm Budnitz, Sebastian Burgess, Jim Capel, Will Cook, Tom Driscoll, Randy Emmitt, Bo Howes, Elizabeth Keating, Gene Kingsley, Thomas Krakauer, Matt Lawing, Marcia Mandel, Carol McRae, Brian Murphy, Don Pelly, Jelmer Poelstra, Roger Shaw, Deck Stapleton, Steve Stevans, and Fleeta Wilkinson.
Exclusives: American Bittern, Snowy Egret, Northern Harrier, Merlin, Rusty Blackbird
Notes: The Durham Spring Bird Count was held on Sunday April 26, 2020. One for the record books we had record high 24 observers in 14 parties tallied 138 species (average 117) and 7910 total birds (average 4445) led by 941 Double-crested Cormorant, 308 Northern Cardinal and 260 Red-eyed Vireo.

Highlights were many, new to the spring checklist were calling Virginia Rail (fourth record) in Little River section, Snowy Egret (second) at the Ellerbe Creek mouth area, Mississippi Kite (third) over a backyard near the Eno River, Warbling Vireo along Panther Creek/hickory hill (first), Gray-cheeked Thrush at Eno River boat ramp (first, but several around this season), and one Sedge Wren (third) at Flat River Waterfowl Impoundment.

We lit up the "rarer" list with several, admittedly I need to update this old checklist format and put these on the expected side! Bonaparte's Gull (three parties and pretty plumage), Herring Gull, Red-breasted Merganser (two parties), Common Loon (four parties), American Bittern, Northern Harrier (three parties), Merlin (two parties), Greater Yellowlegs, Chuck-wills-widow, Bank Swallow (two parties), Magnolia, Cape May and Blackburnian Warblers, Rose-breasted Grosbeak (four parties), Bobolink (two parties), Rusty Blackbird and Baltimore Oriole (three parties).

Misses: for the second year in a row we missed Rock Pigeon, I even checked all bridges. And I won't be greedy, but other species shamelessly undetected this year included Hooded Merganser, Northern Bobwhite, American Woodcock and White-crowned Sparrow.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!
Brian Bockhahn

Falls Lake – count date April 27th, 126 species, 5770 individuals, 23 participants in 15 parties plus one feeder watcher, 71.60 party-hours. Weather: Mostly clear skies, moderate winds, temperature 48-68°F.
Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)
Participants: Herb Amyx, Pat Amyx, Brian Bockhahn, Norm Budnitz, Sebastian Burgess, Will Cook, Ed Corey, Tom Driscoll, Kevin Durso, Sandy Durso, Marti Kane, Gene Kingsley, Kyle Kittleberger, Elliot McDowell, Carol McRae, Brian Pendergraft, Josh Southern, Deck Stapleton, Sara Steffan, Steve Stevens, Patty Tice, Karen Walencik, and Tom Walencik.
Exclusives: None
Notes: The 17th Falls Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 27, 2020. Twenty-two observers in 15 parties and one feeder counter tallied our second highest 126 species (average 114, high 130) and our highest total of 5770 total birds (average 4004).

Most numerous birds were 420 Double Crested Cormorant, 297 Ring-billed Gull and 242 Northern Cardinal.

First Records: a whopping three Sedge Wrens in a field at Olive Grove game lands and a Lincoln's Sparrow in a field at the north end of Beaverdam Lake, check those fields, wow! A count week Marsh Wren was new for the spring checklist, in the same spot as the Sedge Wren and all were photographed!

Other Goodies: two parties had Cape May Warbler (second count record). Kpark in the lower lake had our second Gray-cheeked Thrush and a count week Greater Yellowlegs (second). Two parties had Common Raven (third record). Bank Swallow, Blue-winged Warbler, Veery, Bobolink and Baltimore Oriole were also found.

Misses: Nothing off A-list but we missed Sharp-shinned Hawk, Caspian Tern, Whippoorwill and Common Nighthawk.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!
Brian Bockhahn

Kerr Lake – count date April 28th, 125 species, 4567 individuals, 12 participants in seven parties, 55.05 party-hours. Weather: Cloudy skies, light winds, temperatures 38°-62°F.
Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)
Participants: Brian Bockhahn, Ann Brice, Adam D'Onofrio, Paul Glass, Bill Lindemuth, Joyce Lindemuth, Fred Lobdell, Grace McCrowell, Carol McRae, Evan Spears, Deck Stapleton, and Elizabeth Wooten.
Exclusives: Ring-necked Duck, Sora, Red-throated Loon, Loggerhead Shrike, Horned Lark
Notes: The 17th Kerr Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 28, 2020. Twelve observers in seven parties tallied 125 species (average 119) and 4567 birds (average 3916) led by 565 Double-crested Cormorant, 265 Ring-billed Gull and 211 Yellow-rumped Warbler.

A Sora from Dick Cross WMA, and Loggerhead Shrike from Palmer Springs were new to the spring count checklist.

Other Goodies: Rarity list was well represented with Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Loon (three years straight), Pied-billed Grebe, American Kestrel, American Woodcock, Horned Lark, Marsh Wren (third) and Veery.

Misses: Coopers Hawk, Solitary Sandpiper, Hairy Woodpecker (first miss), Black-throated Green Warbler, Savannah Sparrow and Baltimore Oriole.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Appendix: Please see the appendix for a chart of data from these counts.

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

Josh Southern
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(All dates Summer 2021, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	*December 1–February 28*	*due March 20*
Spring	*March 1–May 31*	*due June 20*
Summer	*June 1–July 31*	*due August 20*
Fall	*August 1–November 30*	*due December 20*

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location) and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **BRP** – Blue Ridge Parkway, **et al.** – and others, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

All italicized place names are counties.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: There was a flurry of sightings in the northern half of NC in early June including five at a small pond in Apex *Wake* NC 4 Jun (Molly Lankford, m. obs.), four at Patterson Place *Durham* NC 9 Jun (Karen Hogan, m. obs.), six where US-64 crosses NC-1139 in *Washington* NC 10 Jun (Matt Janson), and 28, a remarkable count for NC, at a pond in Hertford *Perquimans* NC 15 Jun (Bo Leisenring). Multiple sightings were made in the area southeast of Lake Mattamuskeet *Hyde* NC again this year, including confirmation of breeding near Middletown when a pair of adults were photographed with three chicks 29 Jul (Jeff Lewis).

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, 29 July 2021. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

Snow Goose: One at Isothermal Community College *Rutherford* NC 9 Jun (Simon Thompson) was unusual for summer.

Tundra Swan: Unusual for summer were two in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Hyde* NC 12 Jun (Kees de Mooy), one at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 11-18 Jul (Lucy Jacobson, m. obs.), and one on the western side of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 22-24 Jul (Tobias Gingerich, et al.).

Northern Shoveler: A drake summering at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC throughout the period (m. obs.) was unusual.

Ring-necked Duck: A pair, a drake and a hen, in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 28 Jun through 5 Jul (Shawn Smolen-Morton, m. obs.) were unusual for mid-summer.

Lesser Scaup: Three drakes lingered on the Pamlico River in Washington *Beaufort* NC through 21 Jun (Betsy Kane, m. obs.) and, possibly the same three drakes, on the Neuse River in Bridgeton *Craven* NC through 3 Jul (Tom & Anna Leith). An individual drake lingered at the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC through 3 Jul (Jay Chandler, m. obs.).

Common Eider: One lingered at Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC through 21 Jun (Audrey Whitlock). Six continuing from spring at Beaufort Harbor *Carteret* NC 20 Jun (John Fussell, Curtiss Merrick) was a remarkable count for summer. Two continued at Beaufort Harbor through 16 Jul (Caleb Bronsink).

Surf Scoter: Individuals lingered into mid-June at a few sites along the coast. Five at Beaufort Inlet *Carteret* NC 2 Jun (John Fussell) was a good count for summer.

Black Scoter: A hen on the Pasquotank River *Pasquotank* NC 8 Jul and 19 Jul (Matt Janson) was especially late.

Bufflehead: Individual hens at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC through 11 Jun (Sarah Lindgren) and on Daniel Island *Berkeley* SC 14 Jun (Bob Dellinger) were late.

Common Merganser: Mergansers bred again at two previously documented breeding sites—on the Tuckasegee River in *Swain* NC where a hen was seen with 11 juveniles 4 Jun (Jason Corder) and on the Green River/Lake Adger in *Polk* NC where a hen was seen with seven juveniles 20-26 Jun (Cheryl Day, m. obs.).

Ruddy Duck: Three on the Pamlico River in Washington *Beaufort* NC 21 Jun (Betsy Kane, Steve Taylor) were rather late.

Horned Grebe: One summered on Lake Keowee *Oconee* SC (Don Lenahan) for a second year in a row.

Common Gallinule: One at Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* SC 13 Jul (Max Bolin, et al.) was unusual for the Piedmont in summer.

Limpkin: Breeding was confirmed at two sites this summer—at the Belfair Golf Club near Bluffton *Beaufort* SC where two adults were seen with three juveniles 1 Jun (Jim Massey) and at the upper end of Goose Creek Reservoir *Berkeley* SC, the same site where breeding was first documented last summer, where two adults were seen with two juveniles 27 Jun (Andy Harrison, Craig Watson). Eight, including six juveniles, continued at this spring's breeding site in southwestern *Horry* SC 7 Jun (Scott Hartley). Individuals were seen at the upper end of Lake Marion *Sumter* SC 14 Jun (Frank Farrell) and 27 Jun (Cathy Mathias), at Pickney Island NWR *Beaufort* SC 26-27 Jun (Matthew Valencic, m. obs.), and at Lake Norman SP *Iredell* NC 30 Jul (Caroline Martin).

Black-necked Stilt: Four at the Horse Creek WTP in *Aiken* SC 7 Jun and 29 Jul (Mary Jo Dawson, m. obs.) were unusual for a site away from the coast in summer.

Pacific Golden-Plover: One was seen around the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC during the late summer for a third year in a row. This year, it was seen 8 Jul (Daniel Irons) through 30 Jul (m. obs.).

Wilson's Plover: 112 at New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 21 Jul (John Lynch) was a good count for NC.

Semipalmated Plover: One at McKinney Lake Fish Hatchery *Richmond* NC 14 Jun (Lori Arent, Harry LeGrand) was rather late for a site away from the coast.

Long-billed Curlew: Curlews began showing back up at a few favored tidal estuary sites around the middle of the period. Sightings included one at Hunting Island SP *Beaufort* SC 26 Jun (Milton Hobbs), one at Ophelia Inlet *Carteret* NC 3 Jul (Morgan Barnes, et al.), one at Onslow Beach *Onslow* NC 14 Jun and 20 Jul (Alisa Getz, John Lynch, et al.), three on Deveaux Bank *Charleston* SC during a shorebird survey 25 Jul (Luke Wilde), and one at the Rachel Carson Reserve *Carteret* NC 31 Jul (Lisa Tucci).

Sanderling: One at Archie Elledge WTP *Forsyth* NC 20 Jul (John Haire) was a good find for an inland site during the summer.

Baird's Sandpiper: One at Prater Farm *Anderson* SC 20 Jul (Brian Barchus, Joe & Liz Dunkleman, m. obs.) was rather early.

Pectoral Sandpiper: One at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 21 Jun (Karen Lebing) was unusual for June.

Short-billed Dowitcher: Inland sightings, all made mid-to-late July, included one at a pond along Ballinger Rd in *Guilford* NC 17 Jul (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.), one at Sandhills Sod Farms *Montgomery* NC 19 Jul (Martina Nordstrand), two at Bishop Branch Turf *Oconee* SC 20 Jul (Scott Davis), four at Prater Farm *Anderson* SC 20 Jul (Joe & Liz Dunkleman, m. obs.), and one in Mills River *Henderson* NC 22 Jul (Marilyn Westphal).

Greater Yellowlegs: One at Howell Woods *Johnston* NC 17 Jun (Lori White, et al.) was somewhat unusual for an inland site in mid-June.

Wilson's Phalarope: Individuals were seen and photographed on the lawn at Oregon Inlet Fishing Center *Dare* NC 5-7 Jun (Pat Draisey, m. obs.) and at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 31 Jul through 2 Aug (Jeff Tell, m. obs.).

Heermann's Gull: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent adult Heermann's Gull at Hunting Island SP *Beaufort* SC 21 Jun (Tammy Hester). This bird was almost certainly the same individual seen at nearby Tybee Island

Georgia, near its border with SC, three days prior 18 Jun (Steve Calver, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the first record of this west coast species anywhere in the Carolinas.

Sooty Tern: Not typically seen from shore when not following the passage of a tropical storm, individual Sooty Terns on Bird Key *Charleston* SC 12 Jul (Cacky Rivers) and on Deveaux Bank *Charleston* SC 23 Jul (Maina Handmaker, et al.) may have been attempting to nest at those sites.

Bridled Tern: One photographed at Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC 9 Jul (Scott Mullens) was very unusual from shore outside the passage of a tropical storm.

Roseate Tern: Individuals near New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 21 Jul (John Lynch) and on the eastern end of Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 26 Jul (Aidan Rominger) were unusual for those areas. Counts at more traditional sites included four at Cape Point *Dare* NC 2 Jun (Daniel Irons, m. obs.) and up to three at the northern end of Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 27 Jul (Pat Draisey, m. obs.).

Common Tern: One on Lake Norman in *Mecklenburg* NC 19 Jun (Judy Walker, et al.) was unusual for the Piedmont region in June.

Arctic Tern: Individuals in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 1 Jun and 4 Jun (Daniel Irons) were good finds from shore.

White-tailed Tropicbird: One, possibly two, was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 6 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: Multiple from-shore sightings were made in early June including a remarkable count of 520 off Cape Point *Dare* NC 2 Jun (Daniel Irons). Three around Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 3 Jun (Zealon Wight-Maier) were notable for the SC coast.

White-faced Storm-Petrel: One was well-seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 31 Jul (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). This sighting was only the fifth made in Carolina waters over the past decade.

White-faced Storm-Petrel, 31 Jul 2021. Photo by Kate Sutherland.

Fea's Petrel: One was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 6 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Cory's Shearwater: 1312 in eastbound flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 5 Jun (Daniel Irons) was a notable from-shore count.

Wood Stork: Post-breeding dispersal resulted in multiple inland sightings beginning around mid-July. Farthest inland and a first for the county was one in central *Polk* NC 13 Jul (Melinda Champion, m. obs.).

Magnificent Frigatebird: Multiple sightings were made at sites along the coast from *Currituck* NC south to *Charleston* SC from 3 Jun through 12 Jun (m. obs.) including a count of three over North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC and nearby Sunset Beach *Brunswick* NC 6 Jun (Ed Groneman, m. obs.).

Anhinga: Post-breeding dispersal resulted in sightings at multiple sites in the Piedmont region beginning in late June. 11 over Crabtree Creek Wetland *Wake* NC 14 Jul (Harry LeGrand) was a notable count for the Piedmont. Farthest inland was one over the upper end of Rhodhiss Lake *Burke* NC 16 Jul (Art Webster).

Least Bittern: Individuals at Conestee Nature Preserve *Greenville* NC 17 Jun through 5 Aug (Mark Harvell, Charles Rucinski, m. obs.) and along the Rocky River in western *Cabarrus* NC 11 Jul and 25 Jul (Taylor Piephoff, m. obs.) were unusual for the Piedmont region in summer, suggestive of attempted nesting at those sites.

Great Blue Heron (Great White): One around the Hemingway WTP *Williamsburg* SC 24 Jun through 3 Jul (Jay Chandler, m. obs.) was a good find.

Snowy Egret: Post-breeding dispersal resulted in sightings at multiple inland sites beginning in late June. Farthest inland was one at Lake Adger *Polk* NC 21 Jun (Mike Resch, m. obs.).

Tricolored Heron: Individuals were found at six sites in the Piedmont in the latter half of July. Individuals at the upper end of Lake Fisher *Rowan* NC 22-25 Jul (Stephen Schoon, m. obs.) and at Lake Norman SP *Iredell* NC 27 Jul (Ralph Erickson) were especially unusual for those areas.

Cattle Egret: One photographed in southern *Ashe* NC 17 Jul (Guy McGrane, m. obs.) was unusual for the NC High Country.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Immature individuals seen and photographed along Cane Creek in central *Mitchell* NC 16 Jun (Cathy & Thomas McNeil) and at Valle Crucis *Watauga* NC 25 Jul into August (Paul Laurent, m. obs.) were unusual for the northern mountains.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: Two immature birds at Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 14 Jul (Jay Wherley, m. obs.) were unusual for the mountain region.

White Ibis: One at New River SP *Ashe* NC 30-31 Jul (Joseph Johnson, m. obs.) was unusual for the northern mountains and a first for that county.

Roseate Spoonbill: Spoonbills made a remarkable push inland and northward in July during post-breeding dispersal. County firsts included one at a pond in southern *York* SC 10-11 Jul (Marcus & Cheryl Morris, m. obs.), three at High Rock Lake *Rowan* NC 17 Jul (Kayla Smith), one at the upper end of Lake James *McDowell* NC 21 Jul (Art Webster),

one at a pond along Bowden Rd in *Orange* NC 31 Jul through 25 Aug (Fleeta Chauvigne, m. obs.), and one near Poston *Florence* SC 31 Jul (Jamey Eaddy). Sightings of two or more at sites in the Piedmont included two at Lake Lynn *Wake* NC 4-6 Jul (Susan Conder, m. obs.), likely the same two individuals at nearby Shelley Lake 6-8 Jul (Steven Vozzo, m. obs.), three at Cane Creek Park *Union* NC 10-15 Jul (Chris Huffstickler, m. obs.), five along the Catawba River in *Mecklenburg* NC 13-18 Jul (Greg Hays, m. obs.), two in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt *Guilford* NC 20 Jul into August (Henry Link, Matt Wangerin, m. obs.), and four at Lake Twitty *Union* NC 26 Jul (Dennis Kent, m. obs.). Two on the northern Core Banks *Carteret* NC 29 Jul (Rebecca Jones, et al.) was the northernmost sighting made along the coast. 13 at Twin Lakes in Sunset Beach *Brunswick* NC 12 Jul (David Wilson) and eight at New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 21 Jul (John Lynch) were notable counts for NC. 85 on Dewees Island *Charleston* SC 26 Jun (Laura Caudill, et al.) was the high count for SC.

Swallow-tailed Kite: As usual, Swallow-tailed Kites began dispersing from their breeding grounds in mid-July. Unusual for the mountain region was one just south of Brevard *Transylvania* NC 15-17 Jul (Michael Plauché, m. obs.) and two over Lake Louise in Weaverville *Buncombe* NC 20 Jul (Tom Dudley). 20 near Belton *Anderson* SC 23 Jul (fide Ann Bailes) was a notable count for the Piedmont.

Northern Harrier: Individuals lingering around the Bodie Island Lighthouse *Dare* NC through 19 Jun (Larry Chen, Sarah Toner) and at Cedar Island NWR *Carteret* NC 20 Jun (John Fussell, et al.) were suggestive of attempted nesting in those areas. One over the Super Sod farm along Hooper Lane *Henderson* NC 15 Jul (Kevin Burke, Benjamin Whitlock) likely was an early fall arrival.

Mississippi Kite: 30+ over fields in southeastern *Montgomery* NC 31 Jul (Wayne Hoffman) was a good count for the Piedmont.

Broad-winged Hawk: Individuals photographed at Sewee Preserve *Charleston* SC 13 Jun (Pam Ford, et al.), in Sunset Beach *Brunswick* NC 3 Jul (David Wilson), and at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 5 Jul (Ted Falasco) were unusual for sites along the coast in summer.

Red-headed Woodpecker: One seen excavating a nesting cavity at 3450 feet above sea level in northeastern *Watauga* NC 7 Jul (Adrianna Nelson) was unusual for such a high elevation.

Merlin: Four were seen at Land Harbor Lake *Avery* NC, a site where the species was suspected of breeding last year, 27 Jul (Barbara Stewman).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: Flycatchers successfully nested near the Rock Hill – York County Airport *York* SC for a third year in a row, as four juveniles were seen alongside an adult 28 Jun (Andrew Lewis, m. obs.). A pair attempting to nest just east of McConnells *York* SC 7 Jun through 16 Jul (Marcus & Cheryl Morris, m. obs.) were not

successful. The individual seen along Thompson Creek Rd in *Spartanburg* SC in late May remained through 17 Jun (Cherrie Sneed), probably departing due to the lack of a mate. One at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 5 Jun (Jill & Ted Falasco, m. obs.) did not stick around that site.

Willow Flycatcher: A singing individual seen along the Rocky River in western *Cabarrus* NC 3 Jun through 11 Jul (Taylor Piephoff, m. obs.) was suggestive of attempted nesting at that site.

Warbling Vireo: Southeast of the species' typical breeding range, one or more singing individuals were seen and heard at Crabtree Creek Wetland *Wake* NC throughout the period with a high count of three 27 Jun (Kent Fiala, Karen Hogan). Despite the presence of up to three singing birds at that site for two years in a row now, evidence of nesting there is yet to be obtained.

Fish Crow: Nine, possibly including juveniles, in Boone *Watauga* NC 15 Jul (Guy McGrane) were suggestive of breeding in that area. Though this species' range has expanded into the mountains in recent decades, documented evidence of breeding in that region is still lacking.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Individuals at Bass Lake *Wake* NC 7 Jun (Mike Maier, Lawrence Zoller) and at Grandfather Mountain *Avery* NC 28 Jul (David Schlabach, et al.) were very unusual for summer.

Sedge Wren: Five singing individuals at the Voice of America Site in *Washington* NC 28 Jul (Elsa Chen, Matt Janson) was a notable count for summer. One wonders if these birds nested at that site.

Swainson's Thrush: One heard singing at Mount Mitchell SP *Yancey* NC 30 Jun (Dwayne Martin, et al.) was suggestive of attempted nesting there.

Purple Finch: A female lingered at a feeder in western Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC until 16 Jun (David & Susan Disher).

Red Crossbill: 70 around the Richland Balsam Overlook along the BRP in *Jackson* NC 17 Jun (Ryan Bakelaar) was a good count.

Pine Siskin: Individuals lingered at feeders in *Lexington* SC until 13 Jun (David Dobson) and in Raleigh *Wake* until 22 Jun (Lynn Erla Beegle). One photographed at a feeder in Nags Head *Dare* NC 4 Jul (Audrey Whitlock) was especially unusual for July.

Lark Sparrow: One photographed at Gull Rock Game Land *Hyde* NC 27 Jul (Martin Stoner, et al.) was somewhat early, unusual for a site away from the Sandhills in summer.

White-throated Sparrow: One photographed in western Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC 29 Jul (David & Susan Disher) was very unusual for July.

Savannah Sparrow: Breeding was confirmed in eastern *Wilkes* NC when a juvenile was seen in the company of two adults 8 Jul (Max Nootbaar). Three singing males and a female along White Plains Rd near Lomax *Wilkes* NC 9-10 Jun (Nootbaar) were suggestive of attempted breeding at that site as well.

Bobolink: 30 at a traditional breeding site near Beech Mountain in western *Watauga* NC 6 Jul (Paul Laurent) was a notable count for summer.

Northern Waterthrush: One at Catawba College Ecological Preserve *Rowan* NC 5 Jun (Vicky Burke, Bill Hooker) must have been a late spring migrant.

Magnolia Warbler: Individual singing males on Mount Pisgah *Haywood* NC 26 Jun (Jeremy Nance, William Huber), on Grandfather Mountain *Avery* NC 10 Jul (Clifton Avery, et al.), and on Roan Mountain *Mitchell* NC throughout the summer (m. obs.) were suggestive of attempted nesting at those sites.

Blackpoll Warbler: A singing male photographed at Wagon Rd Gap along the BRP in *Haywood* NC 13 Jun (Todd Arcos) was extremely late.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: One in southern *Union* NC 6 Jul (Martina Nordstrand) was extremely unusual for a site away from our highest mountains in mid-summer. Individuals seen at Clingmans Dome *Swain* NC (m. obs.) and at Roan Mountain *Mitchell* NC (m. obs.) intermittently throughout the period were more expected.

Canada Warbler: One photographed at Oconee SP *Oconee* SC 28 Jul (Marc Regnier) was unusual for SC in summer, likely an early downslope wanderer.

Dickcissel: Individual singing males at the Rowan County Landfill *Rowan* NC 17 Jun (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.) and in Delta *Union* SC 1-5 Jul (Greg Berner, m. obs.) were firsts for those counties. A singing male in *Pasquotank* NC 5 Jun through 29 Jul (Greg Hudson, m. obs.) was a first for that county during the breeding season.

CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

www.carolinabirdclub.org

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes to the extent allowable. Pay dues or make donations at https://carolinabirdclub.org/dues. Make change of address at https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile. Send correspondence regarding membership matters to the Headquarters Secretary. Answers to questions about the club might be found at https://carolinabirdclub.org/about.html.

ANNUAL DUES

Individual or non-profit	$30.00
Family	$35.00
Student	$15.00
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Patron	$50.00 and up
Life Membership (payable in four consecutive $100 installments)	$500.00
Associate Life Membership (in same household as life member)	$100.00

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